politics

50c a copy

No. 3, 1947

THEY NEED OUR HELP, a report by Nancy Macdonald 81
NOTES ON THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE . . . 85
REMARKS ON JUSTICE, by Nicola Chiaromonte 88
TOMORROW'S WAR AND THE SCIENTISTS, by Georg Mann 93
HENRY WALLACE (2), by Dwight Macdonald . 96
HASH-HOUSE, by Wallace Hamilton 117
ROME LETTER, by Nicola Chiaromonte . . . 118
DUTCH LETTER, by George Woodcock 119
FILMS, by George Barbarow 121
THE QUESTIONNAIRE: Preliminary Report . 122
PERIODICALS, by Theodore Dryden 124
A COMMUNICATION, by Gelo and Andrea . 125
THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE 126
POLITICKING 127

In This Issue:

HENRY WALLACE

(Part Two)

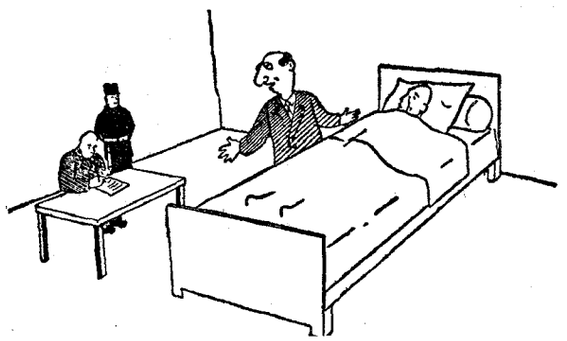
They Need Help

WHEN we began our Packages Abroad project a year and a half ago, we hoped it would be an emergency business. The need, however, has turned out to be tragically permanent.

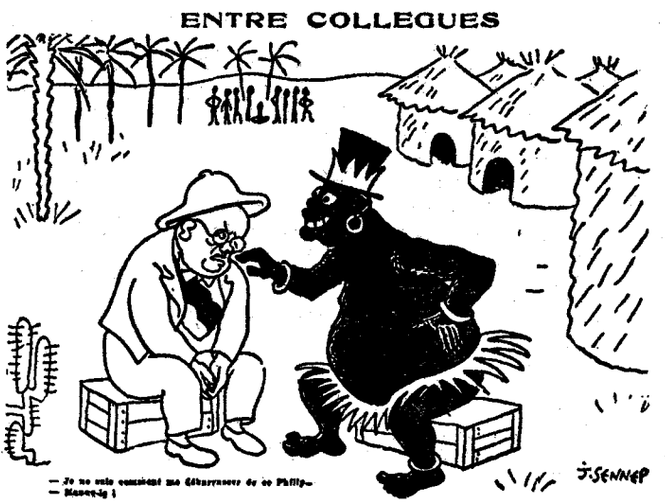
¶ Since May 1, the European food situation has again leaped into the front-page headlines. An exceptionally severe winter, plus disastrous floods destroyed much of the spring harvest. And in war-shattered Europe there are no reserves to fall back on. There is today less food than there was last fall—and things are rapidly getting worse.

¶ In France, much of the winter wheat crop was wiped out. This, combined with the insane Governmental policy of maintaining big military forces in Indo-China and other parts of the collapsing empire, has meant a recent worsening of the already grim living conditions of the people. Our regular correspondents, Gelo and Andrea, have just written us that the daily bread ration is 250 grammes (about ½ lb.)—*as against* 275 *under the German occupation*. Even this ration, they add, has recently become hard to get.

¶ On May 6, an eminent British health authority stated that the English people are now "slowly dying of starvation" on a diet of 2,100 calories a day. He set the minimum health level at 3,000 calories.



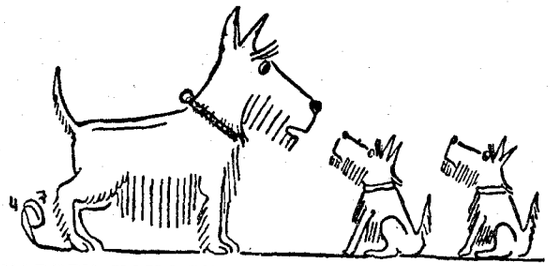
"WHAT DID HE DIE OF?" . . . "HUNGER." . . . "ENTER IT UNDER 'NATURAL DEATH.'" (Le Libertaire, Paris)



André Philip, French minister in charge of rationing is the most unpopular man in France. The cartoon shows President Auriol, during his recent visit to Dakar, conferring with a "colleague." AURIOL: "I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF PHILIP." COLLEAGUE: "EAT HIM!"

¶ If the British are slowly starving on 2,100 calories, the Germans and Austrians are rapidly starving on an official ration of 1,500 which is not lived up to anywhere today and in some places sinks to an estimated level of 700-800. The *N. Y. Times* of May 7 reports that the American-British zone "faces the worst food crisis in the history of the occupation," adding that the major cause is the breakdown in promised grain shipments from the USA. On May 9, the trade unions of Hamburg put on a general strike—the biggest mass demonstration to date in Germany—protesting their starvation rations. General Clay has "implored" Washington to get grain ships to Germany on schedule.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"CHILDREN, YOU MUST KEEP AWAY FROM MEN. THEY GET 1500 CALORIES RATION. BUT WE ARE WORTH 5,000 EACH." (from the German Press)

The readers of POLITICS are only a tiny handful of the inhabitants of this country. But, like the rest, they have a responsibility, as the only great people in the world today which eats well (and more than well), to share some of their super-abundance with their fellows abroad.

This is partly a report on what some of our readers have been able to do in the past eighteen months. But it is primarily an appeal to all our readers to take part in Packages Abroad. Most of the 800 European families whom we have so far been able to help fall into two categories, both of which specially need help and specially deserve it: (1) Spanish Republican refugees in France, who, as aliens, suffer even more than French citizens from the present acute food shortage; (2) anti-fascist Germans who were, for racial and/or political reasons, persecuted by the Nazis.

1. 18 Months of "Packages Abroad"

In the 18 months' period—November 1945 through April 1947—our readers and their friends have sent abroad 11,590 packages of food and clothing. Most were made up and sent personally by readers, but about a fifth were financed through cash contributions sent in to us by readers who could not spare time to make up their own packages. For the period, such cash donations total $17,225.36.

The 11,590 packages sent up to May 1, 1947, represent about 158,000 pounds of food and clothing, which has gone to some 800 European families. This represents a cash outlay by our readers of somewhere between $60,000 and $80,000.

The project started in the fall of 1945, when some of our European friends in America asked us to do something about the many appeals for help which they were receiving from friends abroad. We printed in the October, 1945, issue an appeal to our readers ("Here's *One* Thing We Can Do!") asking them to "adopt" anti-fascist European families and to send them regular shipments of food and clothing. This was followed up by a long feature article ("Starvation! America's Christmas Gift to Europe.") in the next issue. Throughout the winter of 1945-6, our readers responded in a remarkably generous way to this appeal.

During the past winter, the package project has grown at a considerably slower rate. The reason may be that a large proportion of those readers who can send packages are already doing so. A great many of those who started in October, 1945, are still sending. One has sent 71 packages to the first family he "adopted" (a French one), 48 packages to the second (Spanish), 38 packages to the third (Spanish), 14 to the fourth (Spanish in Spain), and 10 to the fifth (German). In addition he adopted a relative of the second family and sent about 40 packages to them. Fifteen of our readers who pledged a monthly check for packages in November and December, 1945, and 25 who started their pledge in the first 6 months of the project, have been sending regular contributions to us every month since then.

We do feel, however, that there are some of our readers —perhaps among our new subscribers—who could "adopt" a family if they realized (1) how much even a little food and clothing means to those who have so little; (2) the importance of this kind of giving from one individual to another, rather than the charity of organizations; (3) the pleasure that can come to one from the friendship of someone belonging to a different cultural background.

Approximately 1480 American families have given aid to our European families. Quite a number of these 1480 are inactive, or at least have failed to keep us informed of packages sent. Those who are still helping are sending packages to 745 European families. (Some families are, of course, getting packages from more than one American friend.) Exact figures on the project to date are:

Packages

SPANISH FAMILIES (Republican refugees in France, a few in Spain)	
Families on active list	288
Packages sent, November 1945-April 1947 (of these 542 were CARE packages)	4,123
Packages sent per month (aver. for 18 mos.)	229
Packages sent per mo. (aver. for last 4 mos.)	162
OTHER FAMILIES	
Families on active list	487
Packages sent, November 1945-April 1947 (of these 1,104 were CARE packages)	7,467
Packages sent per month (aver. for 18 mos.)	415
Packages sent per mo. (aver. for last 4 mos.)	315

These figures show a considerable falling off. However part of this can be accounted for by the fact that those that have been sending packages for a long time do not always notify us of packages sent or the fact that they are continuing to send. We hope that the difference would at least bring up our average of this year to that of past months.

Money

At present, 59 readers are sending us regular cash contributions. 31 monthly pledges paid in April amounted to $307. (28 unpaid pledges in April amounted to $175.) Pledges have fallen off this year: last April we received $720 in monthly pledges.

To get some idea of how this money has been used see the table below with a break-down of expenditures for January-April 1947. The amount received during that period was $2,621.92. (*The amount on hand is* $3.89.)

politics

VOLUME 4, No. 3 (Whole No. 37) MAY-JUNE, 1947

Business Managers: Anna Matson, Nancy Macdonald.
Editor: Dwight Macdonald

POLITICS is published bi-monthly at 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y., by Politics Publishing Co. Telephone: GRamercy 3-1512.

Subscription: $3 for one year, $5 for two years. Add 30c a year for Canada, 50c a year for all other foreign countries. Single copy: 50c.

Copyright June, 1947, by Politics Publishing Co. Reentered as second-class matter April 17, 1947, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1878.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

During that period 77 packages of clothing and 20 packages of food and medicine were sent out from our office by volunteer packers on Tuesday evenings. (*Note: No salaries are paid. All work on the project is volunteer.*) Of the 15,000 copies printed of the "German Catastrophe" leaflet, we have 4,000 left. Readers are urged to write in for as many as they can use. They're free.

EXPENDITURES—January-April, 1947

Food packages (mostly to CARE) . .	$1911.00
Food and medicines bought by "Politics"	125.02
Printing "German Catastrophe" . .	194.00
Postage (for packages, correspondence, publicity)	238.53
Mimeo jobs and office supplies . . .	41.89
Books to send abroad	25.40
Cleaning clothes and mending shoes .	39.20
Specials, (surgical girdle, eyeglasses, sweater and underwear for man with TB)	42.99
	$2618.03

2. Letters—U.S.A.

I found that making up my own packages rather than sending the money to CARE was a lot more fun; it's just like Christmas! My grocery man got into the spirit of the thing, hunted all over for me for dried foods in tins!

B.P., Puerto Rico

I have today some good news for you. First of all you must know that it is due to your activity if our friend Paul A. is—as I have no reason to doubt at this moment—fairly well again. He has been released from the "madhouse" ('Idioten-Anstalt' is his own expression) and writes me a very clear and orderly letter with no sign whatsoever of 'trouble.' But the most interesting thing is that it was with him a crisis of undernourishment. As soon as enough food came in (which his mother took care to bring to him in the 'asylum') and his weight augmented, he improved steadily and finally could go home. He has received a CARE package from D. and H.C. and other packages (it seems, very good ones) from L.A. (*Editor's Note: Paul A. was in a concentration camp for 3½ years. His delusion was that he was going to be sent back to the camp.*)

J.C., New York City

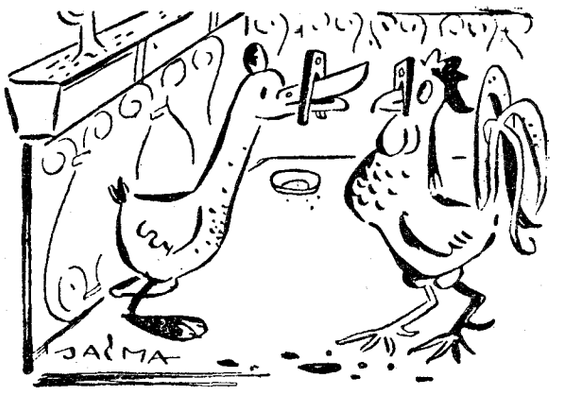
We gave the address of a French orphanage to 3 or 4 readers who had children's clothes to send abroad. Imagine our gratified surprise on hearing from a friend of one of the teachers, who had given us the address:

"Let me tell you in passing how the movement of solidarity launched and sustained by Politics has had ramifications. I spent a day with A. and M., who are corresponding with at least ten different schools and groups in the United States—all friends of Politics—and I spent three hours in reading and hearing of what these willing friends have done and are doing for the unfortunate children."

M.G., Paris, France

Have just returned from Germany. Saw some very pretty Frauleins over there although I was just there a few hours. I would be glad to provide a home for one as I live on a farm by myself. I am 37 years, brown hair and eyes and weight 197. The State Dept. says I can if I want to. Can you put me in contact with an anti-Fascist German lady about 30 years old? I'll send her a package anyway. (Note: *We did and he did.*)

G.O., Oklahoma



"DON'T COMPLAIN—ONE CROW AND YOU'D BE DEAD." (German Press)

3. Letters—Germany

Letter from Hilde T.:

(*Fritz T., a printer and socialist, was Berlin organizer of socialist underground groups from 1933 to 1936. His wife, Hilde T., was "conspiracy secretary" for his group, responsible for inventing codes, remembering names, destroying incriminating documents. They were arrested and imprisoned in 1936. After his release, he took part in the conspiracy against Hitler's life, and left Berlin in March 1945, to evade Himmler's "murder commandos." He is now a Social Democratic organizer. He suffers from malnutrition and heart trouble; she is a victim of multiple sclerosis. A Politics reader is sending food and medicine.*)

I suppose you received my address through our friends over there, since the package was addressed to 'Emmy' T. 'Emmy' was my name in Hitler's time, when one kept one's right name and address secret for reasons of personal safety. . . . Much is written and said of how this cold spell has increased the misery in German cities but the reality exceeds all the reports. It is calculated that between Dec. 28 and Jan. 18 the number of T.B. cases in Berlin more than doubled; these figures represent a suffering which can be fully understood only by those who live in the midst of it. The number of deaths from cold is not yet known, but it increases daily. Babies freeze in their beds, and one sees children on the streets in this cold with home-made 'shoes' of rags, and without coats. That there have not yet been major revolts, looting, and unrest is due only to the fact that people are too weakened and exhausted.

It is terribly depressing to have this misery daily before one's eyes without being able to help. In these circumstances, when we ourselves are often close to desperation, your package arrived like a gift from the Good Fairy of the stories. Besides the joy of the things themselves, there was the encouragement to us not to tire in our work of bringing order out of chaos. It strengthened our faith in the good forces of mankind. If all good people are ready to help, then it is possible to make life in ruined Europe worth living again.

In spite of all offerings and intensities the German resistance movement was not able to dethrone the Nazi-regimen, because the bulk of the German people was passive. We survivors labor by main strength to build up a democratic Germany. But here we stand still at the beginning and we have to conquer great difficulties. It strengthens our belief for the victory of the good, hearing that in America people

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are ready for helping us. With thanks we make use of each hand which helps us.—*Berlin, March* 4.

LETTER FROM X

("X" is a well-known German socialist, a former associate of Rosa Luxemburg, who now lives in this country. He has given us a number of names of German families needing help. His letter explains who these people are, and why it is important to help them.)

Yesterday and today I received a number of terrible letters rfom Germany. All came from proven anti-fascists who up to now had thought they could overcome all difficulties. Now they are tending to lose all hope in the future; they are simply desperate. Although even now they say little of their personal situation, one feels that their physical state is at least partly the cause of their deep pessimism.

What kind of people are these? They are the active anti-fascists. And here one encounters a tragic misunderstanding. Common sense would seem to indicate that one should help those who cannot work or who have no job. Those who are employed are thought to be relatively secure. But of those we want to save nearly all have jobs. Part of them returned to their old employment. But often the best of them have jobs with high-sounding titles and high functions. They are top administrative employees of parties and unions; editors; high officials in social welfare departments; teachers; mayors; county presidents; even state governors and state ministers. But these are the needy who can be saved by private action, who must be saved from starvation. Because they are almost to a man the survivors of concentration camps and the immediate victims of Gestapo terror, and because, above all, they are the support of any development along democratic lines.

We understand very well that Americans feel confused if we ask them to support men in such positions. Let me attempt to explain:

After the defeat of the Nazis, we followed with anxiety any news about the fate of our friends. Only too often did we learn that they were dead. Many who lived told about the terribe sicknesses contracted in the camps and prisons. But all told about the wonderful enthusiasm with which they all immediately threw themselves into work to contribute their bit to wipe out the terrible wounds the Nazis had made and to help rebuild a new Germany. They all were driven by a nervous energy as if the many years of prison-life had not sapped their energies but rather helped them to store them.

They started the work with great illusions. They knew neither the full extent of material and social destruction, nor could they evaluate the sense of the Potsdam decisions. It is a desperate struggle that these men and women have to fight. Every attempt to improve the standard of living was followed by a new set-back, every advance in production was almost doomed right from the start because of the incredible lack of raw materials, tools, even simple nails. Always new waves of destitute human beings are driven into the already overcrowded space that is piled with rubble. Every plan may be overthrown tomorrow because there has been a change in the equilibrium of the great powers. Thus daily activity for these men and women is a wading in drifting sand. These people are slowly eaten up by their work.

And in addition to all this they suffer from hunger. I do not know what they are paid for their work. Maybe what was paid formerly, maybe less. But that is in fact of no importance, since money no longer is of importance.

LUCIEN Allende, a Spanish refugee living in France, spent the years from 1939 to 1944 in labor and concentration camps. In 1944 the Gestapo took him to Germany. The picture (above) shows him, on the 2nd of May 1945, just freed from the concentration camp of Neuengamme near Hamburg, carrying out a comrade who died 2 days later in a hospital. Allende is now recovering from an abscess on the lung, pleurisy and a partial paralysis of his arm due to the brutal treatment of the Nazis. We print below a letter explaining his present need, in the hope that one of our readers may be able to help him.

"I am happy to report that my health is greatly improved," he writes. "However, my health will never be what it was before. So I shall have to be content with restricted activity, and I ought to live in the country.

"Before 1936, I was engaged in apiculture, that is, bee-keeping. The sale of honey used to bring in an appreciable return. I am seriously thinking of returning to this occupation. But for this I must have land and equipment, which requires money, which, naturally, I lack. And so I turn to you to ask whether you could not find some generous friends who would be willing to advance me the necessary sum, or some of the equipment (*ruches, cadres,* etc.).

"Of course whatever you can obtain for me I will consider as an advance and not as a gift."

Will any reader who wants to help Lucien Allende please communicate with Nancy Macdonald?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No salary is sufficient to buy at the blackmarket enough goods to keep soul and body together. Even if these people wanted they could not buy on the blackmarket, since they have no time for this; they even often have nobody who can wait for them on the endless queues that stand in line for the rationed food. One must know: the whole effect of their efforts, the confidence of the labor movement itself, depends on their moral attitude. Thus for them there is no possible recourse to the blackmarket. That is why their lives depend on what friends of a democratic development in Germany can send them from over there. The danger is now very great indeed. The physical strength of these men and women is not so great as their will-power. We have already heard of some who broke down. How many others already have reached the limits of their endurance?

(*Editor's Note: X wrote the above several months ago. The German food situation has become steadily worse since then and is today catastrophic.*)

4. These People Need Help

¶ Franz D. the Secretary of the War Resisters League in Vienna writes: "We have heard of your wonderful work you are doing for peace. . . . Now, we should like you to think of our Austrian friends, who have terrible suffered in the battle against fascism, who have been prosecuted, imprisoned and lost their houses and relatives and herewith live in a very bad state. Many of them are gone beyond return. . . . The surviving have joined together again to continue their fight for peace and freedom. But we think always of the fellows who have lost the fundament of existence and therefor we ask you if you could ask some of your friends to help those poor and suffering, by sending some clothes and food."

¶ Giuseppina C. in Italy asks if any American ladies would wish to have linen or lingerie embroidered by her daughter. "My daughter is willing to work and gain some money, but here there is not any possibility to work and live, principally because there are no people who think to have some lingerie broidered." She would need to have materials sent to her. She sent us a sample of her work. It was finely and carefully done and comparable to the best Italian linen work in the American market.

¶ Mauro T. in Italy asks whether an American firm wishing to introduce its products in Italy and France has need of an agent in Rome. He is 47, understands English, has lived in Constantinople, London and Paris, and formerly had an Import-Export Office in Paris. He will supply references.

¶ Emile H. came back from a Nazi labor camp with TB. Then he had an operation. He wrote us that if he had the money to go to the South of France he could live there with some comrades and there would be a chance that he could recover his health. He needed $150. One of our readers very generously contributed this amount for his trip. His wife now writes us from Belgium: "I just received a letter of my husband, who resides for the moment in Cannes to make a cure which he thanks to the bounty of Mr. and Mrs. G. It appears from this letter that, in spite of the good help of friends who were formerly helped by my husband, the life is there very difficult because all the needful articles are very dear." (NOTE: *Emile H. was the founder of the "Corps Sanitaire Belge pour l'Espagne Republicaine" in Brussels which helped Spanish Republicans in* 1937 *and* 1938).

¶ *We have about* 125 *more families who still need to be "adopted." They are Austrian, French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. Packages cost around* $5, *depending upon what you put in them. We hope you will write as well as send food and clothing. By your packages, by your letters, you can show them that international fraternity is not completely destroyed. All work on the project is volunteer. No salaries are paid. Every penny of your contribution will go for food, clothes and postage.*

Nancy Macdonald, Director

Will You Send Food to a European Family?

Nancy Macdonald, Politics, 45 Astor Place,
New York 3, N. Y. 5

I want to help.

☐ Please send me the address of a European family, plus full mailing instructions. I will undertake to send them ..... package(s) a month.

☐ I enclose $..... to pay for food packages. I will undertake to send you $..... a month to keep up the flow of packages.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ UNIT _____ STATE _____

Notes On the Truman Doctrine

The "Truman Doctrine" has two aspects, foreign and domestic. Foreign: it is a declaration of economic and ideological war against the Soviet Union. Domestic: it calls for unprecedented security measures against Communism inside this country. With the recent passage through both houses of the initial appropriation for military aid to Greece and Turkey, the Doctrine has now progressed from a proposal to a reality. The temper of Congress leaves little doubt that the funds will also be appropriated for its implementation at home.

1.

On March 12, 1947, Harry Truman, president of the United States by the act if not the grace of God, changed the face of postwar world politics when he asked Congress to appropriate $400 millions for military loans to Greece and Turkey. He made no secret either of his general or his specific purpose, apparently not realizing that these were in deadly conflict. The latter was to prop up the present reactionary governments of those countries so as to contain the expansion of Soviet imperialism. The former could be more eloquently expressed: "I believe that it must be the policy of the U.S. to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must . . . help free peoples maintain their free institutions."

As a move to counter Russian imperialism, Truman's proposal has its points. The Soviet Union plays in world politics the same role Nazi Germany did in 1936-1939: that of a totalitarian, militarized "have not" power using aggressive tactics to upset the status quo in its favor. Appeasement—as practiced by Roosevelt at Teheran and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yalta and by Truman at Potsdam—has been no more effective in moderating the dynamism of Stalin's drive to world power than was Munich appeasement with Hitler. Only a firm stand, backed by a show of force, will be effective. It can even be argued—I think with justice—that such a policy is more likely to postpone World War III than a "soft" policy. But only to postpone it; the show of force must sooner or later come to a show-down of force, ie.., war. Thus at best, the Truman Doctrine is no more than a detour on the road to World War III.

As a means of "helping free peoples maintain their free institutions," it is grotesque. Turkey is just another military-police state like Spain or Yugoslavia, and the entire $100 millions allocated there is to be spent on the army. The present monarchist government was imposed on the Greek people by force after the British Army had crushed the party that had the support of the great majority, the Communist-dominated EAM (see POLITICS, January-May, 1945). This government has refused to impose rationing or price control: the rich live better and the poor worse than in almost any other European country. There is no income tax. There are no exchange controls: since the Germans left, rich Greeks are estimated to have sent out over $50 millions in cash to American banks. No sensible import-export controls: "the first consignment of imports the Greek government allowed to be purchased abroad included 7 tons of chocolate, 3 tons of cosmetics, nearly 19 tons of combs, and *several thousand tons* of picture magazines" (Raymond Daniell, *N. Y. Times,* April 5, 1947). These figures may explain why the Greek military forces, estimated by the *Times* at almost 150,000, have been unable to suppress the tiny outlawed EAM bands in the North, estimated (maximum) at 13,000. The Greek army, states Truman, "needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority of the government throughout Greek territory." In short, American funds are to be used to enable a monarchist oligarchy to deal with popular opposition. If, as Truman and Marshall insist and as is on the whole true, misery is world Communism's best ally, this would seem to be a peculiar way to "help free peoples maintain their free institutions."

2.

Ten days later, on March 22, Truman made a comparably great alteration in domestic politics when he issued an executive order calling for an investigation of the political beliefs and activities of every one of the 2,200,000 employes of the Federal Government. This purge, of unprecedented scope, is to dismiss from the Government service every employee guilty of any one of a long string of offenses, including (beside "treason" and "sabotage") such cloudy matters as "performing his duties . . . or in any way acting in a manner which better serves the interests of a foreign government than the U.S." Further, the Attorney General is instructed to draw up a list of "totalitarian, fascist, communist or subversive" groups which "seek to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means." This list may or may not be made public, at the discretion of the Attorney-General. Any Federal employee who is found to be connected with such a group may be summarily dismissed. Further, the "Loyalty Board" which will decide his fate is not required to reveal the source of any accusations against him. Thus the domestic aspect of the Truman Doctrine provides that an individual may be purged (a) on the charge of an accuser whom he is not permitted to confront, or (b) for connection with a group whose identity he is not told.

That this is a proposal to fight a totalitarian group—the American Communist Party—with its own methods is clear: punishment on anonymous denunciations for unspecified crimes is the essence of Nazi-Stalinist jurisprudence and the antithesis of what was once foolishly thought to be basic American procedure. That Congress will appropriate the considerable sums necessary for this witch-hunt ($25 millions is the initial appropriation asked for by Truman) also seems clear: its temper was accurately shown when the House Appropriations Committee on May 5 voted deep cuts in all Federal budgets except one—that of the F.B.I., which will play a key role in the Truman purge and whose director got the full $35 millions he asked for after he had delivered a speech to the committee on "the spread of Communism in the United States." Of those who argue that such measures are justified in order to "defend democracy," it may be asked what kind of democracy will result from such measures?

3.

All "practical" politics today tends to be reduced more and more to the conflict between the USA and the USSR. These are the two remaining Great Powers; their friction is constantly more intense and irreconcilable; it magnetizes the class struggle in advanced nations like France as well as the colonial revolt in Asia, reducing both to skirmishes in the major battle; domestic politics are increasingly trivial, foreign policy swallows up everything, either—in the case of the Big Two—as preparation for eventual war, or—in the lesser nations—as maneuvering between the Big Two.

In terms of "practical" politics,* we are living in an age which constantly presents us with impossible alternatives. That is, alternatives which *both* appear to lead us away from the direction we want to go in. Such an alternative, it seemed to me, was posed in the recent coal strike, as well as in the last world war. This is not to deny that a choice was possible *if the existing alternatives alone were to be consulted*: Lewis was quite definitely a "lesser evil" to the Government in the strike, just as an Allied victory was a lesser evil to a Nazi victory in the war. But the miners' cause was so flawed and corrupted by the one-man dictatorship that controlled their union, just as the Allied cause was by the nature of the American and Russian social systems, that the only choice one could make with a clear head and a whole heart seemed to be—not to make a choice. However realistic it may have appeared at the time to back an Allied victory as "better than Hitler," it now looks like pure romanticism to have expected from the military defeat of Germany by the Allies anything more than the military defeat of Germany by the Allies.

The Truman Doctrine poses another such impossible alternative. America or Russia—or, more accurately, American imperialism or Russian imperialism? If these be the only alternatives—as they are in terms of practical politics—my own choice would be for the former, no doubt partly because I happen to live here, but also because we have not yet reached, by far, the degree of totalitarian horror that Russia has. But, for the reasons expressed above, the

* By this I mean a politics which works in terms of the effective forces now existing. The term would include not only the bourgeois liberal or conservative, working within the limits of the status quo, but also the classic Marxian revolutionary, who saw in the oppressed workers an existing effective force to overthrow this status quo. The last flicker of this Marxian hope, in this country, was the "Third Camp" position in the last war: opposition to both sides on behalf of a revolutionary "Third Camp" of the masses—which turned out to be tragically non-existent.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Truman Doctrine appears to be more a competitor than an opponent of the Kremlin Doctrine. Nor do I think this is either a "mistake" or a policy peculiar to "reactionary" politicians, which could be set right if "progressives" were put in their places. It seems rather the kind of policy suited to the kind of economic and social system we have, and I think that if Henry Wallace had won out over Truman in Chicago in 1944, he would by now have evolved a "Wallace Doctrine" along much the same lines.

4.

If we admit there are only two alternatives in world politics, USA or USSR, and if we find it impossible, from the standpoint of our own values and hopes, to choose either, where are we? However logically and morally valid, our position is not an easy one. It raises some distressing general questions. Is it any longer possible for the individual to relate himself to world politics? Can these vast and catastrophic events be any longer conceived of in terms of radical choice and action? And if they cannot, must we not regard them as part of natural rather than human history, affecting us for good and ill like the weather—and also, like it, something everybody talks about but nobody does anything about?

On May 12, the *N. Y. Times* published a detailed survey of the military forces now being maintained throughout the world, after two years of "peace." This shows that there are almost 19 million men under arms, at a cost—in a world three-quarters of whose population gets too little to eat—of $27,400,000,000 a year, which is over ten times the yearly budget of UNRRA. This is about $10 billion more than was spent in 1938, when the world was preparing for World War II—and this despite the elimination of Japan and Germany. The USA spends a third of its budget on its army and navy; the USSR keeps 4 million men under arms; smaller nations, war-shattered and bankrupt, starve their people to maintain big armies; thus France has 430,000 men under arms, of whom almost half are in North Africa and Indo-China.

Even a statesman can see that all this is something close to insanity. Nor is it hard to show, in a general way, that the remedy must be as radical as the disease, stopping short of nothing less than pacifism and libertarian socialism. The data on which to base such a conclusion becomes more abundant every day, the arguments more convincing, but the scale and complexity of world politics has also become such that it seems to be a process uncontrollable by man's will and consciousness.

Superior insight into history used to be exhilarating for radicals: if we can see more clearly than the Enemy what is really going on, then we can use this knowledge to advance *our* values. But now the clearer one's insight, the more numbed one becomes. Thus during the war, some of us wrote articles in this magazine predicting that the conflict would *not* solve anything, that Potsdam would have tragic consequences, that the methods used by the Allies were infecting the moral atmosphere, that Russia and America would clash violently as soon as Germany was disposed of, etc., etc. Almost all the rest of the press, from liberal to conservative, was more optimistic. It turns out we were more right than they. This should make us feel prescient, confident.*

Instead, it is discouraging. For our positive ideas have not worked out, either: the world seems farther than ever from either pacifism or socialism. As one brought up in the Progressive tradition, which assumes that if we only "know enough" about any situation, we can master it, and which further assumes, in its scientific innocence, that for every problem there *is* a solution and it is just a question of finding the appropriate road to it—I say that as one brought up in this tradition, I find it disconcerting to be confronted with a problem that shakes this assumption. We radicals are faced with a split between knowledge and action; we may overcome it, but we cannot any longer assume that we will; and meanwhile, in any case, there it is and it's not at all comfortable.

In the above, I am discussing only the dilemma which big-scale politics (and especially its ultimate, world politics) presents to the radical of today. On this scale, the situation indeed appears desperate. But on a more limited scale—that in which the individual's own thought, action and feelings can "make a difference"—political problems are more tractable, and there is some connection between knowledge and success. There, too, "practical politics" is possible: "effective forces now existing" (both emotional and rational) may be called into play. The slim hope left us is that in this limited, small-scale kind of activity some seeds may be planted now which will later produce larger changes. This kind of activity, also, can be rewarding in itself. But on the world scale, politics is a desert without hope.

D.M.

* Indeed, certain sectarian groups do now express such an attitude, so that one imagines, in the awful moment after the globe has been split apart by atomic bombing, a thin voice floating down the wind of dissolution: "Capitalism means war. We told you so."

Subscribe Today to

The PROGRESSIVE

Acclaimed as one of America's foremost liberal journals by Charles Beard, Sen. Wayne Morse, Walter Reuther, Robert M. Hutchins, Norman Thomas, Jerry Voorhis, Roger Baldwin, William O. Douglas, and Stuart Chase.

Special Trial Offer
$1 — 22 Weeks

Mail Coupon Today!

.....

THE PROGRESSIVE
Madison 3, Wisconsin

Please send me The Progressive for 22 weeks. I enclose $1.

Name .....

Street or RFD .....

City .....

State .....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Remarks On Justice

by Nicola Chiaromonte

The waking have one world in common; but the sleeping turn aside each into a world of his own.
HERACLITUS

JUSTICE? What is Justice?

"A word. And what is that word, Justice? Air."

The trouble is that the Falstaffian answer is given not only by disreputable characters, but also by men who take it upon themselves to bring real justice into this world.

The challenge must be met. So let us meet it radically, and admit, to start with, that Justice is a word. But we must note that the necessity for using this word is not clear, as when we call a stone a stone. And he "that died o' Wednesday" for the word, Justice, must be understood, not less than he who died on Sunday for the thing, sack.

The word is used, and has to be used. But that which imposes its use upon us cannot be a word also. The contention which will be argued here is very simply that it is elementary prudence to be concerned with what we cannot help but mean when we use the word justice.

What I have tried to do in the following pages is to point out certain aspects of the question that seem to me important. I have not tried to deal with all the aspects of the problem. Even less have I tried to give a comprehensive answer which could then be used to solve the conflicts that arise in life between justice and politics; justice and welfare; justice and power; justice and humanity. I do not claim to know the connection between justice and everything else that is good or to be desired. And I certainly do not claim to know the rule which would permit us to connect, in each particular case, the demands of justice and those, let us say, of the "historical situation": what *should* be done and what *can* be done. Hence, I should like to make it as clear as possible that I am not trying to reject "a priori" any particular attempt, under given circumstances, to find a way of achieving some justice. I would only insist that any such attempt should remain open to the question: "Is it just?"; and that, even in the extreme situation in which it would appear impossible to be just without committing some injustice, this fact should not itself be theoretically justified so as to become a norm of some sort.

IF the word justice had meaning only to the victim, the problem would be simple enough. But it is plain that, if there is scarcely a victim who has not asked for justice, there is scarcely a despot who has not claimed to be dispensing it. Just as no actor can do without make-up, no one who steps into the limelight of history can appear without some emblem of Justice. Moreover, on the stage of the world the roles are not forever fixed. There are times when the victim manages to become the executioner. If we can accept him in his new role, it is because he was a victim before. But the same justice that was with him while he was a victim is against him now that he is a hangman. Shall we forget this simple fact?

On the other hand, there seems to be no more defenseless victim than the oppressor shorn of the power on which he has staked everything, facing bare vengeance. He certainly has no appeal. According to the law by which he lived (and which, if he has any dignity, he will not retract) cold retaliation is already too generous. Furious vengeance is quite appropriate. The position of the avenger, however, is far more doubtful. He cannot without hesitation take over the very law against which he revolted. He started out to do justice. He cannot easily back down. For him, retaliation itself raises a problem. "An eye for an eye" is supposed to be a strict measure. The oppressor did not concern himself with measures. But he who is applying a *measure* to what has been done (and, even more important, *what is going to be done*) cannot avoid the question: "Is this the *right* measure?" If he does not, others will ask it. It is a very vital question, since the shape of the future hangs there in the balance. If the gallows of Nuremberg were so loathsome, it is because nothing was ended there, except a few wretched individuals, and nothing started, no justice and no reason.

Here is not merely a question of mercy or of humanity in general. Vengefulness is as natural to man as mercy, if not more so. While those who did what was done in Ausschwitz and Buchenwald are clearly beyond mercy and beyond any other sentiment for that matter. The survivors of the Nazi camps do not seem to have asked either for revenge or for mercy: all they asked was that such things could never happen again. "The deed is too grave for any mortal to pass judgment on," says Athena in the *Eumenides*. Neither mercy nor revenge, nothing merely human, can quiet the Erinyes. Only an impersonal measure: Justice. But those who ask for justice are only men, mortal persons; and so are those who attempt to live by injustice. It may be true that nobody can get rid of the question of justice. But it also appears that in the world as it stands nobody cares for justice apart from desiring the cessation of certain evils; and nobody wants injustice either, but only to get certain things by the means nearest to hand.

WHAT is injustice?

According to Hegel, "The wrong which can be brought upon the individual in the realm of the ethical world consists merely in this, that a *base something by chance happens to him.*"

There are a number of very Hegelian strings attached to this statement. One of them is: "The power which perpetrates on the conscious individual this wrong of making him into a mere 'thing' is 'Nature.' It is the universality not of the community, but the abstract universality of mere existence. . . . " What is interesting here is the way in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which the "base something," the "chance," the mere "happening" become so quickly lost, the way in which they are swallowed up by the exigencies of the general frame into which they have to be fitted.

For the man who suffers injustice, it is not, of course, the "universality of the community" nor "Nature" that are "the power which perpetrates the wrong"; it is always another man, or a number of men, or a man-made institution that is responsible. It may well be that Nature and not "concrete Reason" is at work in the responsible men. However, the fact that a man can become for another man something like a stone, a volcano, or a plague, being a subject for wonder and horror, can scarcely be put forward as an explanation.

Nevertheless, if we take it out of its peculiar metaphysical context, Hegel's statement contains a notion which is rather suggestive. It is the idea that injustice is, to start with, the fact of a man's will blocking the way of another man and refusing to give a reason for this. From the child that is forbidden a pleasure without being given a reason for the prohibition, to the man who is barred from a course which he deems reasonable by a power that is merely strong, and does not care to persuade, the unjust ultimately appears as a "base something" happening "by chance," the act of a power whose ways are beyond comprehension: a stark *blow*. The blow may be repeated every time the gesture is attempted, and one may resign oneself to the elementary tactics of avoiding the occasion. But the unintelligibility, and the humiliation, remain. Insofar as this corresponds to some actual experience, it is certainly not an abstract principle, a Moral Absolute, or a category of the Mind that is here violated, but rather the more or less "natural" course of a real activity. In order to say that there is injustice, one does not have to assume that the man was right to begin with. Of course, he may very well have taken the wrong path. In fact the feeling that he may have been wrong is a part of his humiliation. He did what he did because he thought it was right, or because he had been taught that it was the thing to do, or possibly just because other people did so. And now it seems that he was violating some law, interfering with the economic order of the community, offending the State or the landowner. He is forcibly told to stop, or to follow a different course, in exchange for reasons that to him are either repugnant, or obscure, or not reasons at all. Ultimately what happens might be right. But the fact is that between what the man was doing and the blow his life received there should be a relation, a measure, and that to this measure he is refused access. Here is the "rub": the injustice, a man's life submitted to chance not as a consequence of some natural disaster but, precisely, where some law is expected, in human society. If the injustice can be called "absolute" it is because the event is irremediable, and not because the victim pretends to know what an Absolute is.

One point has to be stressed here. The question of injustice is not merely a "moral" question. It is not the business of two individual consciousnesses, one facing the other, each with motives of its own, and struggling for supremacy or compromise. There is something in the middle: a definite relation between two human realities, and the possibility of a measure. Without this any question of justice or injustice disappears. If the conflict were simply a "moral" one, there would be a clash between two different purposes, but no ground for judgment. When love or friendship come to an end, we don't say that the wounded person endures an injustice. There is no measure of such relationships outside the permanence of a certain sentiment. Even if there has been some injustice, what really matters is the violation of the intimate bond, rather than the injustice itself. On the other hand, injustice is certainly no obstacle to love. More prosaically, if my money is stolen from me, I may think that this is very bad indeed, but I have no way of saying that I have been treated unjustly. The not-quite-universal objection to theft might very well not apply to my particular case. If I am rich, and if I suppose that the thief had great need for money, theft might have been just after all, or not altogether unjust. Even when a man kills another man for personal reasons, we hesitate to "judge" if we don't know anything of the relationship between the two men. We can only condemn murder in general. But the particular case confronts us with the enigma of the individual conscience. Only the Philistine passes judgment on such matters.

ONE could say that the question of justice arises when the fact of "being together" (the social) is seen as an original part of the human condition, is acknowledged a reality of its own, and is not confused either with the merely "subjective" (what belongs to a given individual and to nobody else) or with the merely "objective" and factual (what belongs to everybody in general, and to nobody in particular). The fundamental injustice might be to ignore such a reality, and the first step toward justice to recognize in this original datum a value as elementary as any other value. If, on the other hand, the fact that men live *in relation* to each other is viewed as presenting only a "moral" problem, to be solved in the light of a "moral law" (of Duty or of Love) and the peculiar substance of the relationship is overlooked, there is no ground left for the question of justice. "Just" and "unjust" then become synonymous with "good" and "evil," a problem for individual consciences. The common ground, society, is made to be simply the ground of practical adjustment, of compromise with one another and with the powers-that-be. Peculiarly enough, the "ethical" itself is then turned into a question of moral "regulations," a merely legalistic matter, as in all Church moralities. The "social question" becomes the question of politics, i.e. of the State, a matter on which only the legislator and the jurist are competent to decide. The legislator and the jurist, in their turn, are supposed to apply the moral law to the field of the useful and the necessary. Together with the statesman, they ultimately become the real arbiters of morality (as in the Hegelian system). This is the point where modern philosophy which had started out to assert the complete autonomy of individual consciousness, enters into radical contradiction with itself. This is also the moment when the Church, whose most consistent claim is that there is no such thing as the autonomy of the ethical, appears as the official defender of individual morality against the State.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Those who resolve the moral into the social, and the social into the practical and the political, tend to disregard the stubborn fact of individual consciousness, and the moral problem with it. But, what is more, they eliminate the ground of the just and the unjust by subordinating all questions to the practical exigencies of the body social. The claim is raised, as Proudhon put it, that the individual must be enslaved in order that the mass may be free. The practical, or rather, the "pragmatic," becomes with such people a kind of Categorical Imperative and Moral Absolute. Instead of moral casuistry we have the casuistry of the economic, the technological, the political and finally of expediency. One does not have to deny the importance of economics, technology, politics, and even expediency in social life, in order to notice that from such a point of view, the peculiar identity of each social relationship tends to be ignored in favor of certain aspects of it, and ultimately in favor of a more or less arbitrary decision about what the general interest is at each moment.

When a man is, in Hegel's language, transformed into a "mere thing" by a human power which refuses to justify itself, we don't need to appeal to any moral principle (not even to the principle that it is bad for a man to be treated as a thing) in order to say that this is unjust. We don't need to know first the nature and the laws of the power that perpetrates the wrong. We need not assume that the victim was right because he was following a "spontaneous" course, while the power was acting "mechanically" (although this may well be an aspect of the truth). All we need to do is to strictly observe what actually happened, namely, that communication was denied where communication was expected. Something concrete is involved; the course of a human existence has been thwarted. Maybe this was inevitable. But only the persuasion that it was really so, that no lying and cheating, no loading of the dice, was involved, can confer some innocence on what happened. The existence of communication and the possibility of persuasion presuppose that there is some community of interests. And for the sake of what he has in common with others the individual may well consent to a sacrifice that it would be otherwise unjust to impose on him. But, for this to be possible, reason has to come in at some point. It is a choice between social life making some sense, or no sense at all. Society, in this context, means *relations*. If the proffered relation is denied, or meets with a rebuff, society itself is in question, the very ground of human existence is shaken.

THIS is a rather one-sided argument. It was followed through not because it made possible a "definition" of justice, but because it helped to underline one aspect of the experience of injustice, namely, the moment when an individual's attempt to find a place for his activity is met by command and force rather than by reason and persuasion. It seems that if one admits, to begin with, that it is right to submit the individual to the "mere chance" of self-justifying acts; or that society and the individual are incommensurable, then it becomes very difficult to draw a line between the just and the unjust.

Today such a "line" appears peculiarly "ideal," not to say empty. The horrible discovery of our time is, in fact, not only that man can be thwarted, but that such thwarting is being brought about by the mechanisms of society itself, man having become a victim of the fact that he lives together with other men. Or rather, the primary fact of living together has turned into something like a speechless Doom, out of which scourges, blights, catastrophes, must fatally erupt, according to a law which is as organic as it is unfathomable. So that we hesitate to accuse simply the State, Capitalism, Industrialism and other wicked machineries, as if everything might be responsible except ourselves; while at the same time we are well aware that adding our possible guilt to the general wretchedness does not help much either. To implore or curse God seems particularly meaningless, since we know that the evil springs from among ourselves, and even from a number of definite causes. But the whole remains nameless. Our situation is certainly not Job's. Having been struck down with God's consent, the man from Uz could question God's justice, refuse his friends' explanations, lament, implore, bow before the incomprehensible. But, if the unpersuadable antagonist had been, instead of God, the State, the historical process, the "situation," not anybody in particular, and hence, in a way, everybody; a power supposedly rational and yet beyond reason, Job would have had to remain silent and alone on his dunghill.

Moreover, there is nothing of the majesty of Fate in our world. Indeed, modern necessity seems to dictate that we must not respond to it in ethical terms, but merely resign ourselves to the indignity of bare survival. The modern Job (when he survives) resembles the Russian worker of whom we get a glimpse from a page of Kravchenko's book. In a Soviet factory the assembled manpower was one day called on to approve by acclamation some new norms of slavery. Everybody raised his hand except a certain Kilyushkin. He was asked to explain himself. He explained, "My job is to work, and I work. I have a wife and three children. I get 140 rubles a month. This is my only suit. What do you need my vote for? But if you want it, here it is." And he raised his hand.

Everything is man-made here: the factory, the misery, the fear and the resignation, the power that manufactures fear and resignation, Stalin on the top, fixed there by the power of which he is the meticulous agent. Yet finally the whole is beyond our comprehension.

We don't have to live in Russia, or be stuck in some extreme situation to meet the incomprehensible. In our daily life, as well as in the consideration of what may happen tomorrow because of the Near East pipelines or of Macedonia, at practically every step we encounter the "base something" happening "by chance" to us individuals. At practically every step, we, as individuals, become foreigners in society, being told that we are nothing but numerical units in a transcendental calculation; and that, before daring to object, we should make sure we know what we cannot possibly know if we are only units: all the rules of the operation and all the reasons for it. Until we are left in a condition similar to that noticed by Dwight Macdonald as typical of the life in a big city: we see people being robbed, hurt, murdered, and are unable to make the slightest move to intervene, as if paralyzed by some strange force. The strangest thing of all is that our pow-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

erlessness seems connected with the fact that there are others who could intervene—only they don't, because of us. Here, it is not only Christian love that is wanting. The fact that has to be faced is the power which works on everyone and strips everyone of many things besides love for one's neighbor. What has been obliterated is not merely a subjective sentiment, like love, but rather the primary evidence that there is something in common between two men simply because they exist, the very root of society and of justice. This fearful absence is precisely what we find personified and glorified in such a representative figure of our time as Joseph Stalin. It is an absence as cold as the waters of the Stygian River: "those limits whose darkness," as Hesiod says, "strikes a shuddering chill even into Gods."

THE voice that asks for justice is a baffled one.

There is an ancient Egyptian text which describes the helplessness of the man "who stands alone in the court of justice, who is poor while his oppressor is rich. The court oppresses him saying: 'Silver and gold to the scribes! Clothing for the servants!' " From this solitude the man conceives of a mere non-existence, a sheer Utopia: "A judge as unerring and impartial as a balance."

The unknown Egyptian seems to have wanted something modest enough: to not feel "alone in the court of justice;" he asked that between him and his rich oppressor some measure be interposed, so as to balance a *power* by which otherwise he could only be crushed. He did not ask for a contest of force, but for the very opposite. He wanted a square deal, a just judgment, there and then. And because he wanted this, he presumably also wanted such a treatment to be assured to him on other occasions, so that he should not feel protected one time and alone the next time, a plaything of chance. In asking this, he was asking something for others as well as for himself. Stability, in such a matter, would be utterly impossible if it were not entirely objective, safe, stable, *the same* for everybody. So, while asking for something humble, the Egyptian serf was also asking for something most majestic, Justice unchangeable, or perhaps, more simply, justice on all occasions. And we know that from the most ancient times, safety, stability, and uniformity have been inseparable from the notion of justice. The "just man" was held to be not the man who happened to hit upon the "right thing" by chance, but the one who was able to do so with some consistency.

The law of the Egyptian judge was expressed in the shout: "Silver and gold to the scribes! Clothing for the servants!" Invested with the authority and surrounded by the paraphernalia of Justice, this judge was supposed to be just by decree. But, instead of being just, he was the obedient tool of his masters: a rather ordinary occurrence. The victim of his proceedings could not simply wish another individual as judge, on the mere chance that a different man might be more just. The oppressed almost invariably invokes a Form of Justice. The Humanity of a Form. Justice alive. But how can a Form live? or be real? In the end, however, when justice is asked for, it is something as extreme as this that is demanded. Or rather, something extremely improbable: "A judge as unerring and impartial as a balance." Strangely enough, so long as men are in question, we cannot say that such things are absurd, and should be treated as such, without at the same time denying that human society should make sense. The moment we reject the measure that we know to be merely "ideal," we are apt to start reasoning in such a way as to reject also the humbler claim that there should be some justice *hic et nunc*.

But, again, what is Justice?

If he has not been rendered inert by brutality and fear, the man who is subjected to injustice is always baffled. Baffled because he does not quite understand what has happened to him, or why; and also because he did not expect his fate. Naively, tenaciously, man expects that other men should make some room for his existence: justice. If this expectation were mere daydreaming, disappointment would be all to the good. But expecting justice was not due to absentmindedness. What makes the dereliction of the wronged man so tormenting is precisely that injustice tends to turn into an illusion something that was very real to start with: the experience, which no man is so wretched as not to have had at some moment of his life, of love, of friendliness, of the *right* behaviour on the part of other men. This is the experience which projects the norm of justice. And in this sense one can surely say that justice is prior to injustice. For justice does not present itself as an intellectual notion until injustice, by making some experience problematic, and forcing us to ask ourselves "why?" and how?", also leads us to the point where we have to give reasons.

This seems to indicate that, whatever the task of doing justice may be, it cannot be regarded as the projection of something entirely new, something whose shape lies completely in the future: an "historical task"; but rather, to begin with, as the recollection and clarification of an experience which, however dimly, already contains the norm of what is to be done.

Justice is not at all an intellectual scheme to be imposed on society with more or less violence, on the pretext that it is required by reason or history. Today, we know only too well that almost anything can be imposed on society, if one admits no limit to the use of force. Moreover, there is injustice whenever one asserts of a social aim that it *must* be accepted by all to start with. From that moment on, it is useless to invoke anything but force. In actual history, however, something else is always invoked: the good of the whole, justice. Which proves that the question cannot possibly be one of mere opportunity and force but, on the contrary, of a just law to which opportunity and force must be submitted.

In any case, doing justice is, first and foremost, the defense of a specific right (that of the Egyptian serf, of Alfred Dreyfus, or of the modern proletarian) which defines and limits any action on our part. Outside of this, the realization of justice becomes a confused and questionable business, and finally loses meaning.

For example, justice is not the "search for justice." Roughly speaking, the thesis of the "enlightened liberal" (or, as Macdonald would have it, of the "progressive") is that the business of making society just consists of dutifully striving towards the approximation of some ideal goal. The striving and the approximation are considered

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to have value in themselves, while the goal, precisely, is only "ideal." "The movement is everything, the goal is nothing," as old Bernstein said. This implies that each step has no independent value, hence one should not be fussy. That is, compromise is an essential part of the process. It is the striving that counts, and if we start fussing we put the striving in jeopardy. From the point of view of justice, however, everything counts. Because justice concerns itself with what happens to man in time, and what happens in time happens once and for all. Failure is irremediable. In every instance in which justice is not actually done, and injustice somewhat overlooked and condoned, there is no justice, and that is all there is to say. The striving doesn't count. Justice means *justice,* not the search for it.

This brings us to the question of history, to the notion that, since justice can be realized only in history and by it, looking for justice requires that we adapt ourselves to the laws of the Historical Process in the first place, being assured that, one way or another, justice and the historical process are one and the same thing. At this point, already, justice is made into a problem for history, and not for man; or at least, for man only insofar as he is able to guess the course of history and follow it. The whole process is ruled by the law which Hegel called the Cunning of Reason, and which we still find at the basis of much contemporary political thinking. To state it simply, the Cunning of Reason consists of the idea that, by definition (for Hegel, according to the essential logic of the Idea), the results never coincide with the ends sought. Which is as it should be, since History does not have to take into account the partial wishes of the individual, but only Reason. In practice, we are advised to conceive of our aims as forming a vague frame of reference, and then to throw ourselves resolutely into historical action, ready to accept the final verdict of history as the only possible, hence the only reasonable, one. In other words, insofar as our aims are somewhat illusory in the first place, we should agree to give them up in advance, in favor of the law that governs the outcome. The working of this law is what we should study, making of the law the foremost object of our attention, if not of our worship. Except that, if the Cunning of Reason be a true theorem, the law that governs the outcome is precisely what we cannot know. Hence, what we really surrender to is the irrational, the incoherent, the organically confused and bewildering: the "sound and fury" of events.

What is worst, in such a way of thinking, is that it turns upside down a primary and universal experience, namely the awareness that it is one thing to know what we want, and another thing to be sure that by following even the most reasonable and clever course we will realize our intention. The actual chance lies in between, in the world of action. That is, in the end, of Fortune: of everything that we don't know, and which makes us aware that, if we reach some kind of fulfillment, we will have been lucky. And, if we fail, it will not have been entirely our fault, but the common lot of men. Such an awareness might comfort the man who runs aground, and encourage him not to give up; lead the conqueror to wonder, and restrain his insolence. In any case, there—in the clearness of the purpose no less than in the irremediable chance—is what makes the dignity of all human accomplishment. But where the law of action is supreme, where there is no other kind of rationality, human enterprise is made into a sort of organized artifice, and the man of action becomes nothing but a ghastly drudge. There can be no meaningful sorrow, then; no just pride in success; no restraint in victory; and surely no dignity in defeat. If we give up the notion of what we want, and of the limits within which we want it; if, when confronting the risks and the turmoil of the real world, we make of what is ruthless in action, and unpredictable in events, a stern rule, what will remain?

It has already been said that there are situations in life in which it seems impossible to be just without committing some injustice. Let's go farther, and admit that only the refusal to act in any way, under any circumstances, towards any real end, in fact only the most radical refusal of life itself, would enable one to escape from the necessity of having to choose at some moment or other, from among a number of injustices, the particular one that to him seems most just. In political action, this comes up all the time. When the Bolsheviks, for example, claimed to be doing the right thing in shooting the Kronstadt sailors, they meant, of course, that the injustice they were obviously doing was more just than any other act possible to them under the circumstances. For the sake of the argument, let's take their claim at its face value. It will mean that, from the point of view of the just order they were trying to establish, in doing what they did the Bolsheviks had no choice. They were in a dreadful fix: aiming at justice, they had to do something horribly unjust; there was no convincing choice, but still they had to choose; they acted under duress, and it was impossible not to act.

Where tragedy is so extreme, it can only be followed by silence and horror. The man who has done something dreadful because he did not see what else he could do, is beyond approval or disapproval. To be accused or to be excused will not mean much to him. He is shaken by what he has done, and dreads any future circumstance in which he might have to do the same thing. He is alone with his responsibility and his guilt. If he believes in God, he may hope that God will forgive him. If he thinks that there is such a thing as fate, he will know that there is no forgiveness and no remedy; he can only hope that other men will see some human meaning in his case. One thing he will most certainly not do. He will not try to argue that he was right and should be absolved on principle.

In 1921, however, the Bolsheviks took an utterly different attitude. They did not at all act and talk like the man who has done something dreadful. They acted and argued as men who had done something perfectly just. They did not stop at the modest claim that what they had done was the best under the circumstances. They maintained that it was right; and not only that it was right, but that it could be proved to be so; and not only that it could be proved, but that anyone who disagreed was an enemy of justice. They did not argue that their victims were unfortunate, but that they were guilty. Their claim went far beyond that of having had to make a terrible choice under the pressure of dire necessity, as particular

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

human beings. They asked all others to make precisely that choice with them, as if it were necessarily right and just; in fact, as if it followed logically from the rule of real justice. At this point, and in their own terms, the choice they had made was not terrible any longer. It became normal. Painful, of course, in the sense that they would have preferred not to have to make it. But normal just the same, being after all only a particular application of the right system for getting things done.

Now, we may grant that action cannot avoid injustice; we may grant that, for the sake of doing justice, we might find ourselves in the position of having committed an act which we cannot possibly justify, while at the same time we did not know how to avoid it if we wanted to hold fast to our purpose. But unless we are to renounce reason altogether for the sake of action, we cannot at any price abandon this simple distinction: that only an act of justice can be *shown* to be just. And, if we must know that the dreadful might occur where the just was meant, we cannot but feel the utmost repugnance for any enterprise which assumes that the bureaucratization of the dreadful is in order.

THERE are a great many things under the sun besides justice. There is happiness; there are truth, art, love, freedom, and the rigor of circumstances. And let's not forget the Athenian citzen who voted to ostracize Aristides simply because he was fed up with everybody's calling this man The Just.

For the ancient, the problem of justice began in the individual soul (conceived by Plato as a *society* of elements that should be harmonized rather than repressed), and did not stop until it reached the very limits of the visible world, in the question of relation between the order of the universe and human life. If we agree with this, we will also agree that the problem of justice always reappears, as the problem of harmony. If harmony is possible, however, irreconcilable conflict is also real. Since justice means concern with the actual situation of men, and since it is a measure that demands application; an idea which, again and again, aims at being realized, it cannot escape the antinomies of real existence: it can only face them without reticence.

Eventually, there are only choices to be made; risks to be taken; consequences to be confronted. Ideas are, in a sense, reminders that the rest of the world is always there, judging us. Many are the questions, and all are ambiguous. What is certainly unjust is to claim that there is only *one* fact, to which all questions should be subordinated, since they all depend on it. Be the fact State power, the party, the Church, or the "historical task," we are obliged equally to answer with that eternal hostility which, according to Proudhon, man owes to God. Because without a doubt, servitude is being demanded, in the name of an entity which, placed above everything else, is made unmeasureable.

SAFETY FIRST

An ironing-board cover made of burnproof asbestos won Lewis & Conger's annual Safety Award last night. The award and seven honorable mentions were presented at a dinner at which the principal speaker was Major General Leslie R. Groves, who directed the creation of the atomic bomb.—*N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* April 9.

Tomorrow's War and the Scientists

ARCHIBALD MacLeish had the right idea but the wrong profession. He should have written,

> *scientists* Fräulein are persons of
> Known vocation following troops.

The most conspicuously adjustable of these technological tails to the military life are the German scientists who helped design the planes which bombed Guernica and Rotterdam, the V-2 rockets which rained an indiscriminate death on London. Their former means of support eliminated by factors not included in their predictive activities, they have found a new army to follow, a new military reservation on the fringes of which they can ply their trade. Almost three hundred of them are currently doing business at Wright Field and testing rockets in New Mexico. Further shipments of Nazi brains are expected in the near future. The Federal Government expects to import up to a thousand for the benefit of the soldiery. And they are cheap at half the price. One expert estimates that they have already saved the United States $750,000,000 in fundamental research on military rockets alone.

American scientists came out of the war moderately well resigned to following a victorious army from here on in. Once the whopping research funds of the OSRD were spent, once the scientists from the Radiation Laboratory had gone back to their 67 different universities and colleges, it became apparent that American science was under new management.

Science, the organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, carries reports of two important speeches in its issue of January 25th. One speech is by Vannevar Bush, wartime head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development. The other is by Charles V. Kidd, of the staff of the President's Scientific Research Board.

Bush estimates that the Federal Government is currently spending about one half of the country's annual research and development bill of $1,077,000,000. In the past seven years, this bill has tripled, and the share of the Federal Government has increased from twenty to fifty percent. The Army and Navy account for four-fifths of the government's expenditures.

Kidd's figures are somewhat more enthusiastic and disheartening. He sets the research bill *for the Federal Government alone* at $1,500,000,000 for the fiscal year 1946-1947. (This does *not* include the funds spent for research on the atomic bomb.) Reasonably enough, Kidd comments: "This means not only is the Federal Government financing a very large share of the total research and development now undertaken in this country, but that Federal policies with respect to research affect, directly or indirectly, every industrial laboratory, university, and individual scientist." Kidd allots ninety percent of the money to the Army and Navy—approximately $1,300,000,000. The Public Health Service is allotted $11,000,00; the Department of Agriculture gets about $33,000,000; the Bu-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reau of Standards, about $11,000,000. However, Kidd reassures us that some of the Army and Navy research, such as that done on artificial limbs, is also of possible civilian use. Presumably, we are to be as grateful for these crumbs as we are for the work done by the scientists who spent half the war developing particularly virulent strains of botulism bacilli to kill off the enemy, and the other half working on extremely effective means of treating such poisoning should the enemy descend to using biological warfare against us.

The Federal research program is particularly insidious because it is disguised. Most of it will be carried on by means of contracts given to scientists in universities who are supposedly interested in pure research, or by means of contracts with industrial laboratories, supposedly busy making our tomorrows even more synthetically gaudy and durable. Thus the Army and the Navy are able to buy up the best research brains in the country and determine the future course of science. Furthermore, they are also able to tie up the future brains, because the academic scientists will immediately set their best graduate students at work on these government contracts. In addition, they are offering scholarships and free educations to certain selected students. The Veteran's Administration alone is planning to turn out 1,600 Ph.D.'s in psychology in the next three or four years. This figure compares with the peace time average of about 100 psychology Ph.D.'s a year. With such a program, the government is able to control the kind of research to be expected in psychology from now on.

Adult scientists are receiving their share of indoctrination. About eight hundred scientists stationed in Washington, D.C. are receiving advanced training in government sponsored courses. The Navy is giving educational opportunities to scientists at New Haven and at Inyokern, California, where important experiments with rocket weapons are being conducted. The Army provides advanced scientific training at Wright Field.

This control over present and future science becomes increasingly important in the light of the report of the Moe Committee which has announced that there will be a deficit of 16,000 scientists in this country by 1955. Selective Service helped choke off the number of scientists in training. The remainder, apparently, are to be bribed and controlled by the government.

Such Federal controls, it must be admitted, are not entirely pleasing to the scientists themselves. In the first place, as Kidd points out, the scientists are objecting to the $10,000 a year salary limit for those in government service. This, they feel, places a terrific barrier across the career of the searcher after knowledge. In the second place, they object to the difference in per diem travel rates between the $7 a day plus tips given to army officers, and the miserly $6 a day given scientists. Nor are they entirely happy about the programs for training future scientists. Dr. M. H. Trytten, director of the Office of Scientific Personnel says of these programs, "They represent the first attempts of new and powerful interests to assure themselves of sufficient trained manpower to do their job." Which means, according to Dr. Trytten, that promising young scientists are put to work on projects of purely military importance, while equally important civilian scientific programs are left languishing because of the lack of trained workers.

Even Vannevar Bush has roused himself to the following statement: "In the long run, of course, it is to be desired that Federal support of basic research be extended rather through a body that balances civil and military needs and is closer to an understanding of fundamental research than the services, in the nature of the case, can hope to be." And Charles V. Kidd adds: "Whether, in the long run, a large proportion of the Nation's fundamental research can be financed by the Federal Government—and particularly by the War and Navy Departments—without unduly circumscribing, in the name of national security, freedom of discussion among scientists remains to be seen."

Some of the younger scientists are downright unhappy about the military control of research. Scientists at a conference on nuclear physics held at Princeton last September were worried about the military censorship of research. In October, Sir Richard Dale lectured the National Academy of Sciences on the question of the secrecy imposed by the military on the results of research. He said, "We surely have the right and the duty to give urgent warning of any danger threatened by these policies [of secrecy] to the integrity of science, which we, the world's scientists, should hold as a sacred trust, not for any nation, but for the world." This statement is also a symptom of the nonspecific fetish attitude toward science, common among many scientists. Practically speaking, it is but an elaborate way of saying, "Science is wonderful, and I am a scientist, and therefore pretty wonderful too." Dr. Edward U. Condon, recently appointed head of the Bureau of Standards, is somewhat blunter. He has said, "We must regain for all scientists that freedom from military domination which is so essential if science is to be used for peaceful ends." As far as American science is concerned, this is a statement of a long term goal, rather than the announcement of an immediate intention.

As an example of civilian control toward which the scientists are working, we may take the behavior of the Atomic Energy Commission which took over the control of the Manhattan Engineer District with its 43,000 employees on the first of the year. For the last year and a half, scientists had been fighting a brisk battle against military censorship of nuclear physics. They wanted the freedom to exchange ideas, to publish the results of research without being hampered by the Army's ideas of security. Yet one of the first acts of the civilian chairman-designate of the commission, David Lilienthal, was to denounce the Army for having permitted the publication of the famous Smyth report on the atomic bomb. Furthermore, he indicated that other leaks of atomic information were resulting from papers published in scientific journals.

There is a vast confusion in American scientific thinking at the moment. Some of the scientists are preceding along the familiar, deep-walled ruts, pretending that they are not interested in the effects of their work. They are willing specialists, called in when an improved way of bombing enemy civilians is needed, or a better method of bandaging wounded heroes. Others are examining some of their ac-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions in the light of the world in which they live, and even asking questions. Some few find themselves in conflict with some aspects—such as the thinking of the military mind—of the world in which they live. Professor Harold Urey has complained that top-flight scientists are leaving the Manhattan Project because "good men simply will not work on the atom bomb the way the Army wants them to." The use of the word "good" in this statement has a purely technical, not a moral meaning. Basic moral issues trouble the scentists very little. In ten years reading of the weekly *Science* and *Scientific Monthly,* I can count the articles that have shown any basic awareness of any moral issue on the fingers of one hand. There have been no serious attempts to orient science in regard to the general moral climate. Science's self-evaluation of its moral role stands at the point where physics stood before Galileo dropped the weights off the leaning tower of Pisa. Lyrical self-appreciation such as that of A. H. Compton's which appeared in January, 1947, is characteristic. Compton writes, "The atomic program was in fact a crusade . . . [the scientists] were glad for a chance to share in what was instinctively recognized as one of the great human adventures of all time."

There have been slight glimmerings of a realization of the social importance of their work among some groups of scientists. Unfortunately, many of the glimmerings stem from the writings of J. D. Bernal, an Englishman whose love for the rigors of scientific objectivity is so intense that he can look with equanimity upon Soviet attempts to destroy the very basis of scientific method. (But there are plenty of jobs for scientists in Russia. . . .) Others are completely muddle-headed, invincible in their political ignorance. Such efforts marked the atomic scientists who blandly proposed that, in view of the fact that scientists had created the atomic bomb, without greatly worrying about its human consequences, they were obviously the people best qualified to supervise its social use. Those atomic scientists who knew the nature of the task upon which they worked must have been conscious that they were making a special bomb for a special war. The bomb would be dropped under predictable circumstances, used politically by an already existing government, which was based on a definite social structure, existing in well-defined political relationships with other existing governments. International control of the atomic bomb was a problem to be discussed before the bomb was made. Once the bomb existed, any attempt at control by scientists was meaningless. Short of a general strike of scientists, there is no remedy in the hands of the men who made the bomb. And instead of a general strike, the greatest evidence of social consciousness on the part of the scientists is a worried look.

GEORG MANN

A Scientist Rebels

THERE are a few scientists for whom a baby burned out in its crib is just as dead whether the murder was committed by one of Hitler's supermen, or more indirectly by a local American expert in incendiary bombs. They have realized that bad means corrupt good ends, that there is no double standard of morals.

One such is Dr. Norbert Wiener, who recently made an admirable statement of the case for scientific non-cooperation with the military. His letter was printed in the *Atlantic* for January. Dr. Wiener is described as "professor of mathematics in one of our great Eastern universities and one of the world's foremost mathematical analysts," whose scientific skills "played a significant part in winning the war." His letter was a reply to a scientist, employed by an aircraft company, who was doing research on guided missiles and who had written him asking him for a copy of a paper he had written during the war for the National Defense Research Committee. Dr. Wiener refused to give his colleague this information, writing (in part) as follows:

" . . . The policy of the government itself during and after the war, say in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has made it clear that to provide scientific information is not a necessarily innocent act, and may entail the gravest consequences. . . . The interchange of ideas which is one of the great traditions of science must of course receive certain limitations when the scientist becomes an arbiter of life and death. . . .

"The experience of the scientists who have worked on the atomic bomb has indicated that in any investigation of this kind the scientist ends by putting unlimited powers in the hands of the people whom he is least inclined to trust with their use. . . . The practical use of guided missiles can only be to kill citizens indiscriminately, and it furnishes no protection whatsoever to civilians in this country. . . . Their possession can do nothing but endanger us by encouraging the tragic insolence of the military mind.

"If therefore I do not desire to participate in the bombing or poisoning of defenseless peoples—and I most certainly do not—I must take a serious responsibility as to those to whom I disclose my scientific ideas. Since it is obvious that with sufficient effort you can obtain my material, even though it is out of print, I can only protest *pro forma* in refusing to give you any information concerning my past work. However, I rejoice at the fact that my material is not readily available, inasmuch as it gives me the opportunity to raise this serious moral issue. I do not expect to publish any future work of mine which may do damage in the hands of irresponsible militarists. . . . NORBERT WIENER."

CAME THE (RED) DAWN

Seated quietly in the second row was Chaplin's young, slender wife, Oona O'Neill. When the trial adjourned, the comedian sought out Oona. He stood with her for a moment tenderly running his fingers through her long black tresses. And the two left the courthouse with the lawyers.—news story in *The Daily Worker,* April 24.

ADD: HORRORS OF COLLECTIVISM

C. Beverly Davison, proprietor of the Millbrook Pheasant Farm at Millbrook, N. Y., contributes his thoughts on the present scarcity of pheasants in the Eastern states. He writes:

"Pheasant hunting in the United States did not start until sixty years ago, for before that time there were no pheasants. They increased steadily under private management. . . until pheasant-rearing became 'big business' throughout the East. This 'big business' continued to grow until certain states decided to go into the pheasant business. The idea spread like a prairie fire in a high wind with, in my opinion, the result that pheasants have been on the decline ever since."—Rod & Gun column in *N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* Jan. 25.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

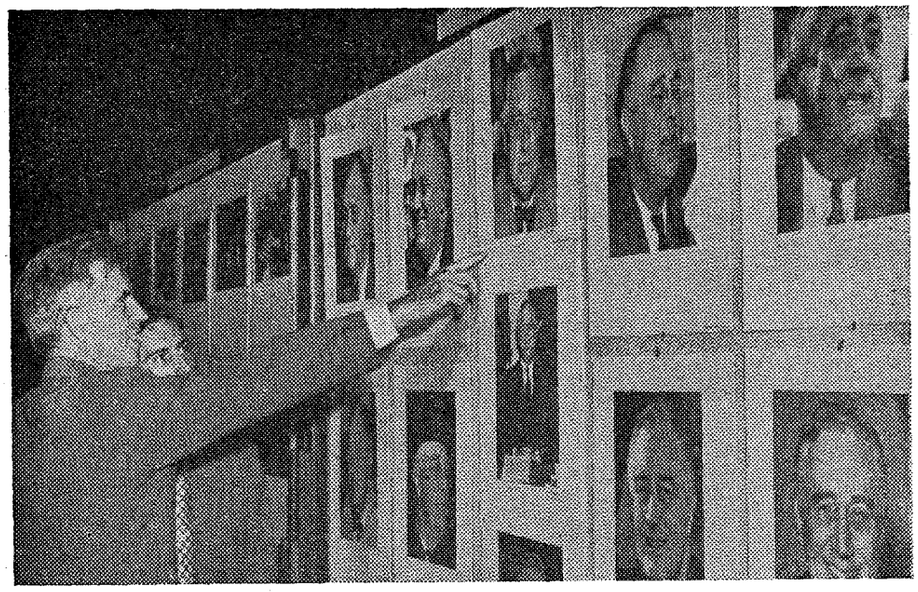


PHOTO BY WIDE WORLD

HENRY WALLACE

(Part 2)

by

Dwight Macdonald

SINCE the first part of this article appeared, Henry Wallace has made a trip abroad which gained him a remarkable, and quite unexpected, amount of publicity. It is true that Wallace lives on publicity, but axe-murderers also get a lot of publicity, without notable personal benefit. This perhaps falls into that category, with Wallace using the axe on his own political future.

It was the speeches in England, his first port of call, that did the damage. Not only did he implore the British not to support his own country in its conflict with Russia, not only did he denounce the Truman Doctrine as "imperialism" (which it is) and praise British foreign policy as peaceloving and democratic (which it isn't), but he presented the unique spectacle of an American politican telling British audiences that their way of life was superior to that of the USA. Carried away, as usual, by the audience before him, Wallace became an Anglophile on a Henry Jamesian scale, contrasting a Britain "morally prepared for postwar problems" with a USA dedicated to "selfishness, nationalism and power politics."

The reaction at home was immediate and violent. For several days, Congress spent much of its time denouncing Wallace. Senators accused him of treason and demanded his prosecution under the long-forgotten Logan Act, which forbids a private citizen to deal with a foreign government to defeat his own government's policy. These demands for the suppression of a citizen's right to free criticism of governmental policies have, fortunately, not come to more than talk—though they are ominous indications of a tendency. But the uproar did have a practical effect, and just the opposite of what Wallace intended by his speeches: the critics of the Truman Doctrine, fearing identification with Henry's wild talk, retreated, even Senator Pepper announcing that he would vote for the Greek-Turkish aid bill. In fact, it is probable that much of the uproar in Congress and the press was deliberately whipped up by the Truman Administration in order to intimidate all critics of the Truman Doctrine. The headlines thus may have been less a tribute to Wallace's oratory than to the shrewdness of his opponents.

By the time Wallace got to Paris, on April 22, he had apparently begun to worry about the reactions at home. (After all, the voters of Kansas and not Manchester, Oslo or Paris, will send or not send him some time to the White House.) This anxiety was increased by the way the Communists monopolized him during his brief stay in France. His only formal welcome came from the Communist Party —which, through its parliamentary affiliate, the Pierre Cot group, had arranged his French tour. When he spoke at the Sorbonne, the only important party leaders on the platform with him were the C.P. trio—Thorez, Duclos and Cachin—and the audience was almost wholly Communist. When he addressed the National Union of Intellectuals, the chairman was Louis Aragon, who later wrote, in the Stalinist daily, *Ce Soir,* that Wallace reminded him strongly of Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman.

"I want to try to avoid being monopolized by the extreme Left, who have been so friendly to me in Paris," Wallace confided to a luncheon of the Anglo-American Press Association, adding that the differences between his viewpoint and Truman's were "not very great."

His most heroic effort at disengagement was his speech to the Paris chapter of the American Veterans Committee. Presenting himself as a good American who believes in democracy, free speech, an economy of abundance and all other pleasant things, he criticised communism and endorsed capitalism. He explained that when he had attacked American "ruthless imperialism" in England, he had referred not to the government's policy but to that of James Burnham and Henry Luce. As usual, the reporters had misquoted him.* He even spoke up for "the enforcement

* Speaking to the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee (Chairman: Marcel Cachin), he repeated this disclaimer, with embellishment: "He added that former President Roosevelt had sought and the Navy had demanded oil of Saudi Arabia, although the USA had half the world's oil already. 'Nobody will stop us,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of human rights in all countries" and specifically for the work of the U.N. Human Rights Commission—though when Mrs. Roosevelt was struggling with the Russians in the Commission on this issue, a great silence had settled over Henry. He concluded with fulsome praise for "the splendid idealism" of Americans, including his A.V.C. audience, "in serving the peace and welfare of the world."

Now that he is back in the USA, we may expect him to develop this general line, trusting in that characteristic of the American people that has served him so well in the past: their shortness of memory.

4. Prophet of the People's Century (1941-1946)

IN the summer of 1940, the Democratic convention, under pressure from Roosevelt, nominated Henry Wallace for vice-president. Roosevelt's insistence on Wallace for his running-mate is one more indication of his political insight. A better choice could hardly have been made—which is intended as a compliment neither to Wallace nor to World War II.

No vice-president in our history has played so important a role as Wallace: he threw himself into the crusade for democracy with an energy worthy of a better cause. Not only did he occupy important posts in the warmaking apparatus, but, above all, he became the country's outstanding moral apologist for the conflict. The role Wilson played in the first war, was assumed by Wallace in the second. After the early Atlantic-Charter-Four-Freedoms period, Roosevelt lost interest in noble war aims and made no secret of his growing "realism." He must have often congratulated himself on his choice of Wallace, who never lost heart and produced ardent moral rhetoric to the very end.

Just as it is generally believed that Wallace, as Secretary of Agriculture, pursued liberal policies, so is it widely believed that he is a "global democrat" of long standing. Actually, the second belief has as little foundation as we have already seen the first to have. Both are part of that mythology which grows so luxuriantly about his figure. Up to the year 1941, Wallace's concern with global matters was confined to the increase of agricultural exports; his internationalism went no farther than supporting Hull's reciprocal trade treaties. In the "collective security" debate, he was definitely on the isolationist side, as his Midwest farm background might have led one to anticipate. Even the outbreak of the war made no change in Wallace's ideas; his 1940 book, *The American Choice,* proposed hemispheric isolation as the method of meeting the German war menace.

In 1941 Germany invaded Russia and Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Bellicose internationalism became expedient for an American leader who was just beginning his association with the Stalinoid Left. A profound change occurred: from an agrarian politician, Wallace became the Conscience of the World (freedom-loving areas, that is); from a perplexed administrator, he became the Friend of the Common Man and the Prophet of the People's Century. After 1941 Wallace's rhetoric soared unhampered by niggling problems like sharecropping. The world is wide and the Common Man is everywhere—and nowhere. After 1941, Wallace's real deterioration began, when he took the whole world for his benevolent province, losing whatever contact with reality he had had up to then and becoming more and more an oratorical gasbag, a great wind of rhetoric blowing along the prevailing trade route of Stalinoid liberalism.

The "Free World" Speech

Wallace's most celebrated wartime oration, an effort he never surpassed and one which made him overnight into the spokesman for "the people's century," was the speech he delivered to the Free World Association in New York City on May 8, 1942. Political speeches do not withstand the passage of time very well, but few have dated so rapidly in five years. Re-reading it today, with the outlines of the postwar-prewar world taking grim shape about us, is a peculiar experience. One wonders about the psychology of the speaker and of the many educated, idealistic citizens who mistook for reality a hallucinatory vision.

"This is a fight between a free world and a slave world," Wallace began in clarion tones. "Just as the United States in 1862 could not remain half slave and helf free, so in 1942 the world must make its decision for a complete victory one way or the other.

"As we begin the final stages of this fight to the death . . . it is worth while to refresh our minds about the march of freedom for the common man. The idea of freedom—the freedom that we in the United States know and love so well—is derived from the Bible with its extraordinary emphasis on the dignity of the individual. Democracy is the only true political expression of Christianity. . . .

"The march of freedom of the past 150 years has been a long-drawn-out people's revolution. . . . The people's revolution aims at peace and not at violence, but if the rights of the common man are attacked, it unleashes the ferocity of a she-bear who has lost a cub. . . . The people are on the march toward even fuller freedom than the most fortunate peoples of the earth have hitherto enjoyed. . . .

"The people, in their millenial and revolutionary march toward manifesting here on earth the dignity that is in every human soul, hold as their credo the Four Freedoms enunciated by President Roosevelt. These Four Fredoms are the very core of the revolution for which the United Nations have taken their stand. . . .

"Modern science, which is a byproduct and an essential part of the people's revolution, has made it technologically

---

yet this is imperialism and to this extent the USA is proud of it. It is not ruthless imperialism but good old-fashioned American imperialism.'" Assuming the wicked press has not once more misquoted Henry, he has added a valuable new concept to the Wallese dialect: ruthful imperialism.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

possible to see that all of the people of the world get enough to eat. . . . The peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United Nations but also in Germany, Japan and Italy.

"Some have spoken of the 'American Century.' I say that the century on which we are entering—the century that will come out of this war—can be and must be the century of the common man. . . . No compromise with Satan is possible. . . . The people's revolution is on the march, and the devil and all his angels cannot prevail against it. They cannot prevail, for on the side of the people is the Lord."

Since I have already analyzed the political meaning of this speech at length—see "The (American) People's Century," *Partisan Review,* July-August, 1942—I shall not go over it again; and, besides, the fallacies and absurdities that had to be demonstrated by speculative argument in 1942 are now being much more effectively demonstrated by the headlines of the daily press. Enough to note that the emotional appeal of the speech lay in its combination of two very deep and mutually exclusive American folk-ideologies: camp-meeting revivalism and optimism about scientific progress.

It also combined provincialism and internationalism in a bewildering way. Like Willkie, whose *One World* a year later sold over a million copies in the first two weeks of publication, Wallace emerges as a latterday American type: the Global Backwoodsman.

Soon Wallace was spinning all sorts of global fantasies. An International Investment Corporation to reshape the face of the earth in the image of T.V.A. An International Air Authority ("The air space above this earth must be used to serve the needs of trade and travel for the Common Man."). An International Police Force. In high Wallesian style, he proposed to keep the peace by "bombing mercilessly" recalcitrant nations.[1]

The Chosen People

In the "Free World" speech, Wallace counterposes to Henry Luce's frankly chauvinist "American Century" the notion of "The People's Century." Yet there are intimations here and there that perhaps the two concepts are not so far apart as might appear. Certainly Wallace makes no effort to hide his admiration for his native land; if he has some kind words for other nations, it is always because they are toiling upward to the high culture that the USA has already achieved. In the past, Wallace had struck the jingoistic note with naive frankness. In 1938, he had, on one occasion, summoned "all classes to cooperate together to make this land truly the Chosen Land of the Lord, an example and a help to other lands."[2] And on another, he had written: "For the first time in the history of the world, we have here in the United States the possibility of combining into a truly harmonious whole all the pre-requisites to the good life. . . . Other nations may rival us in one or two of these progressive forces, but not a single nation is so universally blessed."[3] And in 1940, he had carefully listed the ways in which America is superior to Europe:

(a) "We have not yet become slaves to national hates."
(b) "We can never feel at home again in the midst of diplomatic intrigue of the sort which seems always under way in the Old World."
(c) "We do not consider ourselves a part of the system of economic imperialism which dominates Europe and Africa and Asia."
(d) "We have no urge to take either markets or resources from other peoples by force."
(e) We are against "the dictator system," destruction and soil erosion.

Conclusion: "So we are disillusioned with the Old World." However: "In saying this, we are not self-righteous."[4]

A month after the "free world" speech, Wallace showed that his newly acquired internationalism had not changed his ideas about the Chosen Land. He joined hands with Luce, and indeed went him one better, in a speech delivered before a religious group on June 9 to which he gave the intriguing title: *Why Did God Make America?* This speech deserves to be better known than it is. "History thus far," Wallace begins, "seems to be but the prelude to a magnificent world symphony. In this prelude, many themes were played. One glorious theme is how the Lord God Jehovah had a special interest in one chosen race, the Jews, and in one promised land, Palestine. . . . But the Jews by themselves and Palestine by herself could not build the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. The spiritual essence of Judaism would eventually find its expression here in America. But God held America back, and the Romans destroyed the Jewish nation." The divine election next seemed to descend on Rome, but God still held America back. In time, the British Empire arose, but "God still held his hand over America." Finally, like a football coach who reserves his star player for the crucial touchdown in the last quarter, God has given the signal to America, "the heir of the religious concepts of Palestine and the culture of Rome and England." The prelude to the world symphony is finished, and the magnificent opening chords of the major theme are heard. America is about to undertake God's mission of "building in the full sun of a new day for a peace which is not based on imperialistic intervention." Aware of her Manifest Destiny, she is taking up the White Man's Burden. The *Pax Americana* is to embrace the world.* "The American peace will be the peace of the common man."

SPAB, BEW and POW!

Apocalyptic speeches were not Wallace's only contribution to the war effort. He also held high executive posts in the wartime economic machinery. In August, 1941, Roosevelt put him at the head of a new top economic "coordinating" agency, the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board (SPAB), which folded six months later after no more and no less ineffectual an existence than its predecessors had had. As a consolation prize Roosevelt gave Wallace the Board of Economic Warfare (BEW), an agency concerned with buying war supplies in foreign countries. At the beginning of 1942, Wallace was made chairman of BEW; he appointed his close friend, Milo

* Revised as of September, 1946, to exclude areas now enjoying the Pax Sovietica.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perkins, Executive Director. Perkins, who originated the Food Stamp Plan, one of the few politically progressive and economically sensible innovations of the New Deal, was an able executive.

The main function of BEW was to build up stockpiles of scarce raw materials: tin, rubber, quinine, etc. Wallace and Perkins went at this aggressively; they also tried to use these big purchases so as to raise the living standards of the supplying countries. (This is one of the rare instances of Wallace's actually trying to *do* something to implement his ideology.) Their freehanded spending brought them into conflict with Jesse Jones, of the RFC, who had authority to release or with-hold funds for BEW's purchases. Their liberal social policy caused friction with the State Department—Cordell Hull and Will Clayton were the chief antagonists here—as in the case of BEW's unsuccessful attempt to insert clauses into its Bolivian tin contracts forcing the owners to spend some of their increased revenues on raising wages. Roosevelt finally settled the issue in April, 1942, in BEW's favor, taking away both Hull's political and Jones' financial veto powers. Or rather, appeared to settle it. Actually, Hull secured a quiet reversal of the decision a month or two later on; while Jones, whose approach to the problems of war economy was that of a small-town banker, continued to hamper BEW administratively and began to work on Congress to undermine Wallace and Perkins.*

By the spring of 1943, Jones was asking a Congressional committee to restore his former veto power over the BEW's purchases; since Jones was extremely, and indeed excessively, popular with Congress, there was a good chance that this might be done. Bernard Baruch, oddly enough, supported Wallace in the row; but Roosevelt preserved a discreet impartiality. Finally, in June, Wallace and Perkins were goaded into issuing a detailed public statement showing that BEW's record in amassing stockpiles was much better than RFC's had been. Jones replied in kind, less convincingly. The Wallace-Perkins idea was to compensate for Jones' inside track with Congress by an appeal to public opinion, thus putting pressure also on Roosevelt. The strategy misfired, however, and Wallace sustained the most unexpected and terrible blow of his whole career. Roosevelt took a "plague on both your houses" stand, rebuking both Jones and Wallace for making their quarrel public. But, as in the similar stand he took in the 1937 Little Steel Strike, the weight of Roosevelt's displeasure fell almost wholly on the Left: Wallace was abruptly kicked out of BEW, which was handed over to the Jones crowd, in the person of Leo Crowley, a leading Catholic layman and the $60,000-a-year head of Standard Gas & Electric Corp. *The New Republic* editorialized, with little exaggeration, that Roosevelt's action was "the most severe shock to his liberal followers since he has been in office"—except for his aid to Franco during the Spanish Civil War. The government agencies "in which New Deal ways of thinking prevailed" had already been reduced to two: the BEW and the Federal Communications Commission; now only one was left. Fighting a modern war just doesn't seem to jibe with New Dealism. (This last conclusion mine, not theirs.)

* The classic Jones wartime story is his retort to a colleague who was groaning because one-fifth of the entire stockpile of rubber had just been destroyed in a dock fire: "But the stuff's insured!"

"Henry . . . Would Remain Loyal"

There is no recorded case of Henry Wallace's separating himself, on an issue of principle, from either power or those who dispense it. So was it now. His reaction to Roosevelt's stab-in-the-back was not to resign the Vice-Presidency, not to protest Roosevelt's increasingly frank abandonment of New Deal principles, but to set off at once on a speaking tour in which he preached the pure New Deal gospel—and hailed Franklin D. Roosevelt as its chief prophet. "I have known the President intimately for ten years," he began his first speech, on July 26 before a large CIO audience in Detroit, "and in the final showdown he has always put human rights first. There are powerful groups who hope to take advantage of the President's concentration on the war effort to destroy everything he has accomplished on the domestic front." His original idea had been to pay even more fulsome tribute to the man who had just thrown him to the wolves; friends persuaded him to tone it down. As Tugwell has noted, with perhaps a touch of malice, apropos the BEW episode: "The President . . . knew that however he was treated, Henry Wallace would remain loyal."[5]

With a demagogy bordering on the cynical, Wallace at Detroit went on to criticise not Roosevelt but "certain American fascists," whom he inferred were typical of the business community, adding: "The reason Mr. Roosevelt is so hated by many big businessmen is the fact that he stopped making Washington a way station on the road to Wall Street." So extreme were his attacks on businessmen in this and later speeches that strong criticism was aroused. So on August 19, Henry took it back, explaining that fascist-minded businessmen were "a small minority" and that "perhaps 95% or even 99% do not fall into that category." He specifically exempted from his criticisms the small businessmen, who in Germany had furnished Hitler his most enthusiastic followers, because in American politics little business is Good and big business is Bad.

The 1944 Defeat

The man "who has always put human rights first" had something even worse in store for the faithful Henry than the BEW humiliation. Just a year later came the great vice-presidential doublecross. In the spring of 1944, Roosevelt sent Wallace on a "goodwill" tour of Siberia and China. Wallace accomplished the task successfully, telling the forced-labor deportees of Soviet Asia how inspiring it was to look into the open faces of free pioneers, observing in Chungking that "China today is guided by the mature wisdom of President Chiang" and expressing a (mimeographed) hope that the Sino-Soviet border would in future be as peaceful as the US-Canadian boundary. In July, he got back to Washington, where he at once discovered that Roosevelt was not enthusiastic about his renomination for the vice-presidency. After Ickes, Rosenman, and finally Roosevelt himself had seen Wallace and tried to tactfully suggest that he withdraw—efforts which were

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

frustrated by Wallace with gentle obtuseness—Roosevelt agreed to write a letter endorsing him for the renomination.

What happened at the Convention is well known: how both Byrnes and Wallace arrived there confident they had Roosevelt's backing, how the liberal bloc made Roosevelt abandon Byrnes only to discover that the precious letter backing Wallace was a weasel-worded document which avoided the kind of commitment Roosevelt had made in 1940, how the big-city bosses plus the Southern delegates were able to beat Wallace with Truman (who also had a letter of endorsement from Roosevelt). Even this Roosevelt-engineered fiasco did not shake Wallace's peculiar devotion to his Leader (who also happened to be still the most powerful political boss of the liberal-labor forces Wallace hoped some day to lead). "The President did all I expected him to," he said bravely. "I told him that in justice to himself and myself there should be nothing in the nature of dictation." (In 1940, Roosevelt had flatly told the Convention that he would accept the nomination only if Wallace was his running-mate.) In a characteristic burst of euphoria, he even saw his defeat as providential: "I feel free now. If I were a candidate, I would have to follow a schedule and deal with issues from a partisan standpoint. This way, I can do more for liberalism."

His way of doing more for liberalism was to campaign ardently for the man who had knifed him because of his liberalism ("Wallace seems to us the superlatively good sport of all time," editorialized *The New Republic*.) In his 1944 campaign speeches, as in those of 1940, Wallace resorted to a crude demagogy which, in a politician less obviously the friend of the Common Man, would remind one of Hitler. His theme was simple: a Republican victory is a Nazi victory. In 1940, he tied the Republicans "objectively" to Hitler and declared that opposition to Roosevelt "whatever the motive" could only "play into the hands of Hitler" since he was "the man Hitler wants to see defeated." Hence: "I want to emphasize that replacement of Mr. Roosevelt, even if it were by the most patriotic leadership that could be found, would cause Hitler to rejoice." (*Time*, Sept. 9, 1940) In 1944, he continued in the same vein, insisting that the only people who opposed Roosevelt were "Germans, Japs and certain American troglodytes," and warning: "A Dewey victory, no matter how estimable Mr. Dewey himself may be personally, will inevitably give hope to the wrong element in Germany and Japan." (Politics, Aug. 1944) It is ironical that Wallace's own recent speeches abroad have now given the Republicans an opening—and a more legitimate one—for smearing *him* as the agent of a hostile foreign power.

Secretary of Commerce

After the campaign, Roosevelt rewarded Wallace for his "good sportsmanship" by offering him any cabinet post he wanted *except* the one he really wanted, that of Secretary of State. (Roosevelt, it is perhaps superfluous to note again, was possibly a rascal and certainly an opportunist, but almost undoubtedly was not a fool.) Wallace chose Commerce, partly because the enormously powerful Reconstruction Finance Corporation came under that jurisdiction, partly because for both personal and political reasons he wanted to oust the incumbent, Jesse Jones. How Congress frustrated him by removing RFC from the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce, how Roosevelt once more played a (to say the least) equivocal role in the conflict—all this I have described in detail (Politics, Feb. 1945) and so shall not repeat here.

Wallace's year and a half as Secretary of Commerce was a lull in his career, of interest mainly for two reasons. (1) His Stalinoid connections were constantly more intimate, so that the peculiar situation came about that the Secretary of Commerce was more and more a Communist fellow-traveller. The looseness of American political alignments is illustrated in this, as well as Wallace's peculiar genius for getting into false situations. (2) Stalinoid though he was, Wallace as always made little connection between his general political philosophy and his specific policies. Thus he passed over the liberal Wilson Wyatt for the Undersecretaryship and appointed instead Alfred Schindler, a conservative St. Louis businessman who had served under Jones. And his choice for the top job of Director of Domestic Commerce was another conservative businessman, Albert J. Browning ("a businessman's businessman" according to *Time*, Jan. 18, 1945), who at once began to demand incentive wages. Another embarrassment was the Small Business Advisory Committee which Wallace set up in the Department, and whose policy recommendations have been, to say the least, not very liberal.

The general Wallesian strategy in the Department of Commerce was characteristic: he ignored the only business group that had loyally fought for him during the struggle for confirmation by the Senate—the "Businessmen for Wallace"—and tried to conciliate the powerful big business forces. The result was also typical: just as all his concessions to the conservative "400-acre farmers" while he was in Agriculture have not created for him any "grass-roots" following today among farmers, so all his overtures to the business community while he was in Commerce have not won him any support among businessmen. The net result of this amateurish Machiavellian maneuvering has been just about zero. For Wallace since 1940 has been increasingly tied up with a tendency which both farmers and businessmen—not to mention the majority of organized labor—regard with implacable hostility: the 'line' of the American Communist Party.

The Common Man Gets the Atom Bomb

In 1934, Henry Wallace wrote: "I should like to find scientists insisting that the benefactions of science be used only in ways that are plainly in the general welfare. It would be encouraging to find, among scientists everywhere, some evidence of honest indignation at the way the gifts of science have been turned against society."[6]

In 1947, Henry Wallace said: "Churchill comes out very strongly for all the glories of Western Christian civilization, and proposes to set up that civilization by the power of the atom bomb. Now, my knowledge of Christianity leads me to believe that you can't put Christianity into power by force, and if you do try to put it into a supreme position by force, the result is not Christianity but something else."[7]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

May we then conclude that at least on the question of The Bomb, Henry Wallace has consistently stuck to humanitarian principles? Alas, no. He was, on the contrary, one of the godfathers of The Bomb. Early in the war, Roosevelt created a secret policy group to study the possible use of atomic energy as a military weapon. Its members included Bush, Conant, Marshall, Stimson—and Wallace. In June, 1942, this group recommended a vast expansion of the work and the transfer of the bulk of the program to the War Department. This was the birth of the Manhattan Project.*

These three points in Wallace's thinking on the bomb may be diagrammed as follows:

1934: no bomb, no war; Henry calls on scientists to insist that their work be used only for "the general welfare."

1942: war, bomb coming up; Henry helps develop the Manhattan Project.

1947: no war, bomb here, Russia on the short end; Henry discovers that civilization cannot be defended "by the power of the atom bomb."

5. Editor of "The New Republic" (1946-?)

ON December 16, 1946, the first issue of the new *New Republic,* HENRY WALLACE, EDITOR, appeared, complete with a cops-and-robbers account of The Editor's Promethean agonies on behalf of the Common Man, a full-page woodcut of The Editor in the Russian ikonographic style, and an editorial by The Editor, entitled "JOBS, PEACE, FREEDOM," which in several thousand ill-chosen words put him squarely on record in favor of all three.**

The first thing to be noted about HENRY WALLACE, EDITOR, is that he is not an editor.† When I interviewed him, I asked whether he passed on the articles printed in his magazine. He replied that he hoped to get time to do so later on, but that up to then he had been wholly occupied with writing editorials and answering his mail. Whatever human frailties Wallace may have, laziness is not one of them, so we may assume that it does not take him a full working-week to answer letters and write 2,000 words of rough-hewn prose. At *The New Republic* Wallace spends his time in *being* rather than *doing*: he simply exists as a Public Figure, a Spokesman around whom Support is Rallied; his workbench is the speaker's platform rather than the editorial desk, his vehicle is the daily press rather than the magazine he allegedly edits. Even the editorials that appear every week under his name are reported to be composed largely by a conclave of office ghosts. Here as in all departments of Wallace's present existence, it is the eidolon, Henry Wallace, that exists rather than any thinking, feeling, doing flesh-and-blood human individual. The connection of HENRY WALLACE, EDITOR with *The New Republic* is, in short, symbiotic rather than organic. ("SYMBIOSIS—The consorting together or partnership of dissimilar organisms.")

The Senility of Youth

The editorial mast-head of the new *New Republic* reads like the roster of the Guatemalan army: there is an Editor (Wallace), a Publisher (Straight), an Associate Publisher, an Editorial Director, an Executive Director, a Managing Editor, six Senior Editors, two Associate Editors, and five Assistant Editors. The output of this imposing hierarchy is a magazine which is twice as big and half as good as the old *New Republic.* Bureaucratization is usually a disease of the old age of organizations, but this enterprise seems to have *started* its life in a state of senility. In this respect, as in the quantitative upsurge and qualitative decline, the new *New Republic* is a real child of the times. Three points about its editorial set-up are worth noting:

(1) The real power behind the facade is the man who puts up the money: Michael Straight, the 29-year-old son of the late Willard Straight, a J. P. Morgan partner who gave the cash to found the magazine in 1914. Straight money has been behind *The New Republic* ever since; after the elder Straight's death, his widow, Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst of London, continued to meet the deficit. Now the younger Straight has taken over and seems to be prepared to spend large amounts of cash and enthusiasm, with both of which he is well supplied, to make it into a Big Thing. Unfortunately—judging from his published work—he knows as much about journalism as his banker father did.

(2) The old editorial staff has been purged with Soviet thoroughness. The only old editor who retains any power is Bruce Bliven, and even his post of "Editorial Director" is said to be largely honorific. Bliven had already half purged the other old-guard editors (see POLITICS, April and June, 1944); when Straight returned from the wars last spring, he eliminated Bliven after a sharp struggle. Today such old standbys as George Soule, Malcolm Cowley and Stark Young, have lost even their formal status as editors. The old Contributing Editors—including H. N. Brailsford,

* In *The Roosevelt I Knew,* Frances Perkins writes: "He [Roosevelt] gave the signal to go ahead on the exploration and development of the atomic bomb because of his hunch that Einstein, like his fellow-scientists, was truthful and wise. He had seen him on Henry Wallace's recommendation, and he knew Wallace, a man of scientific understanding, was also truthful and wise." When I saw Wallace, I asked him about this; he said the story was untrue. Queried, Miss Perkins wrote: "I speak from memory and second-hand information. If Mr. Wallace says it is not correct, I agree."

** Equally bold was the keynote of The Editor's speech at an inaugural luncheon in the Waldorf-Astoria: "I lay down the challenge of battle to the Republican Party utterly and completely!"

† "EDIT—1. To oversee the preparation for publication; conduct, as a periodical."—Funk & Wagnall's Desk Dictionary.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

E. C. Lindeman and Rexford Tugwell—have all been dropped.

(3) The new editors have three things in common: (a) they are young (their average age is 31); (b) they are veterans of World War II; (c) they are former employees of the big-money press: Hearst, Luce, Conde Nast, *McCall's, The Wall Street Journal.*

There are two aspects under which this enterprise may be considered.

The first is simply as journalism. Here what strikes one at once is that, from that Free Enterprise point of view dear to Henry Wallace, Straight's bright young men are not very enterprising. When Henry Luce and Harold Ross set out to follow in the path of Horatio Alger in the twenties, they each had an original and untried journalistic *idea,* which they have slowly developed into big-circulation magazines of the appropriate mediocrity. Even the *Reader's Digest*—also in the twenties—began as a new journalistic idea. In each case, something was started which violated the then established pattern in order later on to supersede it with a new one, as in the case of the supersession of *The Literary Digest* by *Time* and of *Judge* and the old *Life* by *The New Yorker.* But the new *New Republic* violates no pattern; it works with the commercial formulae long ago developed by Ross, Wallace (DeWitt) and Luce—there is even a female research staff, who "check" all articles by putting a verifying dot over each word, just like *Time.* Even the slight amount of originality involved in applying these formulae to liblab journalism was preempted by Ingersoll with *P.M.* The average calendar age of the editors may be 31, but their average journalistic age is closer to 60. They seem unable even to transplant the slick techniques they presumably learned as bright young hucksters working for Luce or Hearst: the new *New Republic* has the defects of both the commercial and the 'little' magazine, without the virtues of either; it has the banality of the former without its slick competence; it has the amateurishness of the latter without its freshness and intellectual seriousness.

The Hucksters Go Liblab

The other aspect under which the new *New Republic* may be considered is the qualitative. When I say it is only half as good as the old one, I do not intend any fulsome compliment. Both liberal weeklies went into decline beginning with the Moscow Trials, the great moral watershed of our age. First Stalinism, then the war subjected their ideology to stresses it could not withstand, with the result that their issues in the decade before the Trials show a striking superiority in courage, honesty and intellectual level over those of the following decade.

There is, nonetheless, a significant difference in level between the old and the new *New Republics.* The latter follows *P.M.,* as noted above, in applying commercial techniques to the popularization of liberal ideas—or what seemed to be liberal ideas until this happened to them. Culturally, this is another instance of that merging of lowbrow and highbrow, avantgarde and commercial whose earlier stages I analyzed in "A Theory of Popular Culture" (POLITICS, February, 1944): "In this new period, the competition between Popular Culture and High Culture is taking a new form: as in the business world, competition is now resulting in a merger. . . . As in politics, everything and everybody are being integrated into the official culture-structure. . . . All this is not a raising of the level of Popular Culture, as it might superficially appear to be, but rather a corruption of High Culture. There is nothing more vulgar than sophisticated *kitsch.*"

Politically, this tendency is equally ruinous. "To attempt to propagate political ideas on a mass scale today," I wrote in "The Root Is Man" (POLITICS, July, 1946), "results in either corrupting them or draining them of all emotional force and intellectual meaning. The very media by which one must communicate with a large audience—the radio, the popular press, the movies—are infected; the language and symbols of mass communication are infected." This dismal judgment is confirmed by the experiences of *P.M.* and the new *New Republic*: the concessions made to demagogy and superficiality in order to attract, or even be comprehensible to, a large audience whose cultural reactions have been conditioned by lifelong exposure to *kitsch;* and the necessity of using the degraded and/or simpleminded type of journalists who will put up with this sort of thing—both these factors almost guarantee corruption in advance. That neither journal so far has attracted a very large audience is another matter, perhaps due to technical defects, perhaps to the resistance of the American mass audience to liberal ideas in any form, but certainly not due to any squeamishness on the editors' part.*

* Despite Wallace's "name" and a lavishly financed promotional campaign, results so far have not been brilliant. In the last half of 1946, the old *New Republic's* circulation fluctuated between 35,000 and 45,000. (These are Audit Bureau of Circulation figures, hence reliable.) On December 9, its last issue, A.B.C. circulation was 43,900. A week later the promotional blitzkrieg had actually raised this to 65,200. This gain was attributed by the editors to a stampede of Common Men to read their great leader's journal. A less romantic explanation may be diagrammed: (a) over 1,000,000 pieces of direct mail are said to have been sent out, not to mention big ads in the daily press; (b) a normal return on a mailing is 2%; (c) 2% of 1,000,000 is 20,000; (d) 20,000 is just about the increase registered; (e) moral: if you spend the dough, you get the circulation; (f) caution: even this increase was mostly in $1 and $2 trial short-term subs; (g) conclusion: the renewal rate will be the real test; (h) prognosis: gloomy. This analysis is supported by the fact that last December's sharp rise has levelled off into a plateau: informed sources estimate the present circulation at just about what is guaranteed to advertisers: 75,000. (No definite information will be available until the new A.B.C. figures are published next month.)

Will This Help You?

Several young men recently released from prison and CPS camp have come to us looking for employment. Other readers have asked if we knew of apartments to rent; if we could put them in touch with others interested in co-operative projects, etc.

To encourage this idea of voluntary mutual aid among "Politics" readers, the office will be open from 6 to 8:30 every Thursday night. Whether you have a problem or a solution, mail it, phone it, or come down in person on Thursdays.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

6. Henry Wallace and the U.S.S.R.

A LARGE power-mass like the Soviet Union exercises a tremendous gravitational pull on an erratic comet like Henry Wallace. In the past year, this pull has become so powerful—or the resistance has been so weakened—that Wallace's Comet appears to have become a satellite of the larger body.

It was not always so. Before he became global-minded, Henry Wallace, like any other solid Iowan, used to damn "communism, fascism and nazism" in one breath.[8] His conversion seems to have taken place circa the year 1941, the year Russia was in spite of herself transformed from fascism's sleeping partner into a peaceloving democracy. That was also the year that Wallace began to talk in *P.M.* language about "world democracy" and other ominous topics. His change of mind was strategic rather than ideological: he still praises capitalism and Free Enterprise and still deplores the class struggle, even when his specific analysis sounds like a *Pravda* editorial. The strategy was to take advantage of the political opportunity that opened up on the Left as Roosevelt's war policies turned "realistic." There were many competitors for leadership on the Right, but Roosevelt's abandonment of New Dealism left a vacuum on the Left, into which Wallace was delighted to rush. Why not a New Deal war? There was a ready-made audience for this kind of rhetoric: the Stalinoids.* Wallace began to talk to them, and they in turn influenced him. Their ruthless energy appealed to his pragmatic side; they knew what they wanted and how to get it—qualities that were both impressive and useful to a man of Wallace's temperament; their enthusiasm for fine phrases matched his own. It was a marriage of convenience that developed into a love match.

By 1941, there was also a personal influence at work on him.

Enter Harold Young

During the 1940 campaign, Wallace became associated with two individuals who were, to say the least, not the type his admirers would have accepted to be his close advisers. One was Charles Marsh, a wealthy Texas oil man and chain-newspaper publisher, who was introduced to Wallace by Roosevelt. Just why Marsh was a Roosevelt man is not clear; his papers were straight commercial enterprises, his associates were the "Texas Regulars"—the Jesse Jones crowd who tried to ditch Roosevelt in 1944—and his general behavior seems to have been about what one would expect of a rich Texan; perhaps it was an old man's whim; perhaps other considerations played a part. At any rate, Marsh is said to have financed Wallace's 1940 vice-presidential campaign. He also introduced into Wallace's entourage, as campaign-manager, his handyman and protege, another Texan: a lawyer-lobbyist named Harold Young. For the next six years, Young was to be Wallace's *alter ego* and most trusted political adviser. He served as "special assistant" during Wallace's vice-presidential term; ran the campaign to get the 1944 renomination at Chicago; and occupied the important post of Solicitor-General of the Department of Commerce during Wallace's term as Secretary. Although Young did not accompany Wallace to *The New Republic,* he still works closely with him and is currently running a "Wallace headquarters" in Washington.

A more vivid personal contrast to Wallace could hardly be found: Young is a big, fat, high-living, profane, back-slapping character, loud of mouth and brash of manner, with a perpetual cigar stuck in the corner of his mouth—in short, the classic type of American ward heeler. "Practical politics" is his specialty, although there is some doubt, despite his authentic vulgarity, as to just how smart he really is. His ego is as little in need of expansion as his waist-line: he apparently treated Wallace with the paternalistic insolence of a worldly-wise big brother toward the shy "intellectual' of the family. Comic situations resulted when earnest delegations for some worthy cause were shunted off to see Wallace's personal representative, and found themselves confronting a replica of Big Bill Thompson. Or when, substituting for Henry at liberal dinners, this tough Texas politico sounded off about racial democracy.

One may guess that Wallace, not an acute judge of people, was impressed by Young's down-to-earth manner, perhaps concluding that any one so clearly innocent of both ideas and ideals must be a very smart operator indeed. One may also guess that he was not at all bothered by the contrast between Young's "practical politics" and his own lofty moralizing, for Wallace has always kept his ideals uncontaminated by contact with his political actions. For him, the real and the ideal exist on different planes, neither inhibiting the free expansion of the other.

Whatever the rationale of the Young-Wallace relationship, those who ought to know insist that the Stalinoid alliance was largely Young's idea, and that it was through Young that fellow-travellers like Harry Bridges had access to Wallace. There was no question of any ideological sympathy, of course. It probably seemed to Young "smart politics" to play in with the Stalinoids, as in fact it was during the war; it would have been even smarter, however, to have advised Henry to let go the bear's tail after 1945, something which Young seems to have neglected to do.

. . . and David Karr

During this period, Wallace acquired another close associate whose personality would have disturbed his liblab public: an energetic young-man-on-the-make named David Karr, a real-life version of the Hollywood "hot shot" reporter. Even his fellow newsmen, no violets themselves, are awed by Karr's colossal nerve. They tell how he used to hang around the Washington airport till he spotted a

* This term is used to indicate a general adherence to the C.P. line of the moment. It embraces party members, fellow-travellers and the vast army of "innocent" dupes. Others listened to Wallace with sympathy, of course, but the Stalinoids provided both the brain trust and the cadres.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

celebrity getting off a plane, whereupon he would rush up, warmly shake hands, grab the celebrity's bag and offer him a lift into town; how he breezed into cabinet members' offices, uninvited and sometimes unannounced, slapped his notebook down and commanded: "Give!"; how he introduced Willkie to Molotov at a Washington reception without benefit of a previous acquaintance with either. His colleagues also regard him, respectfully though not admiringly, as a smart operator, skilled in playing both ends against the middle. Such was the man who ghosted many of Wallace's inspirational war-aims speeches and became a permanent fixture in the Vice-President's office.

During the war, Karr went from the O.F.F. to a $4,600 executive job in O.W.I. He is now a "leg man" for Drew Pearson at a salary estimated at between $15,000 and $20,000 a year. At least one Common Man seems to have found his Century.

There is another aspect of Wallace's wartime ghostwriter which is perhaps worth passing notice. In the House on February 18, 1944, Representative Busbey of Illinois stated: "Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that Vice-President Wallace has recently returned to Washington after one of his extended journeys. . . . Accompanying him, as a member of his entourage, was one David Karr. Mr. Karr, by his own testimony under oath before the Committee on Un-American activities on April 6, 1943, admitted having been a writer for *The Daily Worker,* and also for *Equality,* a Communist-front publication, as well as having lectured for the American League for Peace and Democracy. . . . Mr. Speaker, some of us are wondering if when we hear the voice of Henry Agard Wallace, we are listening to the words of David Karr." It is only fair to add that (a) Karr today vehemently denies any sympathy for the Commies, and (b) diligent inquiry has revealed nothing concrete to disprove his assertion. It *would* be interesting to know, however, whether he ghosted Wallace's speech at the Soviet Friendship Rally on November 8, 1942.

The "Free World" Speech

Not the least of Wallace's debt to the Stalinoids is the job they did on the speech which established him in his present role of prophet of "global" democracy: the 1942 "Free World" speech. The story of how it chanced to become the Gettysburg Address of the liblabs is worth telling.

With one exception, the newspapers reported Wallace's speech in perfunctory fashion; the "angle" they chose was a minor point about the defense of Alaska; not even the *N. Y. Times* bothered to print the complete text; the shimmering ideological exhalations were left to expire unreported, in the New Worlders' banqueting hall. The exception was the Stalinoid daily, *P.M.* And even *P.M.'s* secondary editors had prepared a routine treatment of the speech, also stressing the Alaska defense angle and omitting the "common man" rhapsodies. But Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, editor-in-chief, chanced to have heard the speech delivered; he rang up his staff at 3 A.M. and asked how they were going to handle it.* They told him. Ingersoll exploded, ordered the whole make-up "torn up," the complete text of the speech printed, and the front page devoted to "plugging" it as a great expression of war aims. The paper came out hours late the next day, but it was worth it. Ingersoll's flair for liblab journalism had not betrayed him: *P.M.* made the speech famous, and the speech won great prestige for *P.M.* among liblabs hungry for rationalizations about the war. With typical Stalinoid cynicism, Ingersoll worked up a noisy campaign about the "deliberate suppression" of Wallace's speech by the capitalist press (although his own editors had also been about to "suppress" it). Telegrams were dispatched to leading journalists asking them what they thought about this heinous plot against the common man; the replies were of course, satisfactorily indignant, and made more front-page copy for *P.M.* The ballyhoo reached such proportions that other papers felt obliged, days later, to take extended notice of the speech. Nor should we omit the contribution of another Stalinoid: A. N. Spaniel, president of the International Latex Corp., who heard the speech on the radio and at once bought space in the *The Washington Post* to reprint it as a full-page ad.

It is distressing to have to report that later on Wallace behaved with characteristic ingratitude. He was always willing to listen to Ingersoll's advice as to how to propagandize the Common Man theme. But when it came to giving some one an inside track on news in the BEW, Wallace tended to favor powerful conservative papers instead of the maverick *P.M.* After this had happened several times, Ingersoll blew up: *That goddamned double-crossing soandso! Christ! We MADE the guy!* Few situations are more poignant than when a fast operator suddenly discovers that he is dealing with a brother-under-the-skin.

* This is not the place, unfortunately, for an extensive portrait of this most frenetic and flyblown flower of the decadence of American liberal journalism. When Ingersoll was my boss on *Fortune* in 1933-1936, he was simply a high-priced executive who did just what *his* boss, Henry Luce, told him to do. He was, in fact, even more reactionary—using the term to mean an opposition to the telling of the truth lest it injure the interests of the big-business community—than Luce himself was, since the employee was less secure than was the boss. It was, indeed, Ingersoll who personally emasculated my own final article on the U.S. Steel Corporation (after unsuccessfully trying to sabotage, in the interests of a decent respect for a powerful institution, the earlier part) and thus was the direct cause of my happy exit from the Luce organization. A year or two after this, Ingersoll himself broke with Luce and presently emerged as the creator of *P.M.* This evolution, however, seems to have been less the result of a developing social conscience than of psychoanalytic intervention plus certain personal influences which existed more in the psychological than in the political or rational sphere. In a word, he simply changed bosses: the authority of Luce was supplanted by that of the Stalinoids, and he vulgarized, distorted, suppressed and manhandled the truth as submissively in his role of *P.M.* editor as he had in the *Fortune* period. Ingersoll's alliance with the Communists was of the same quality as that of Wallace and Young: i.e., based not on any particular ideological sympathy—they are quite sincere when they reiterate, to the confusion of their more innocent readers, their personal disinclination for communism—but rather on the soundest opportunistic grounds. The peculiarity of our period is that these grounds are sufficient to produce behavior which formerly only fanatical personal commitment could produce. It is "prophets" like these—one might add Max Lerner and Frederick Schumann to them—who most effectively spread the Stalinist infection. Prophets whose chief authority comes from their sincere affectation of aloofness from the doctrine in whose behalf they distort and suppress.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russia: the General Line

Other instances of Wallace's Stalinoid connections could be given. In recent New York City elections, for example, he campaigned for three Congressional candidates who are notoriously close to the comrades: A. Clayton Powell, Jr.; Johannes Steel; and Vito Marcantonio. Of the last, the only man in Congress who consistently follows the Communist Party line, Wallace stated on November 5, 1946: "Marcantonio has the best voting record of all the 435 members of Congress." (That Steel and Marcantonio were both running against regular Democratic candidates did not bother Wallace, although a few months earlier he had demanded the expulsion from the party of Democratic congressmen who did not follow the party line.) Last October, Wallace was accompanied on his speaking tour of the West Coast by Rep. Hugh De Lacy of Washington, a veteran Stalinoid.

Wallace's relations with Steel—another overripe character, by the way; Henry has a genius for getting mixed up with them—appear to be most friendly. "To my mind," he wrote Steel on February 7, 1946, "you have carried on the fight against worldwide fascism with great courage and determination . . . on behalf of the common man." (That man is here again.) Steel preceded Wallace to Europe this spring, armed with letters of introduction, as a kind of advance scout. He is at this writing in Moscow, covering the conference for a small-circulation "newsletter" he edits. He was not among the 35 reporters chosen by the U.S. press to fill the strict quota allowed by the Russians; but the Soviet Government, for some reason or other, gave him a visa anyway.

Such personal links—not counterbalanced, so far as I can discover, by association with people critical of Soviet policy—show that Wallace is not, as he affects to be, a sincere liberal trying to be "fair" to Russia, but rather an apologist for Stalinism. But even more conclusive evidence is to be found in his public utterances since 1941.

Wallace's "general line" on Russia was memorably expressed in his speech at the Soviet Friendship rally in Madison Square Garden on November 8, 1942. Excerpts:

"Some in the United States believe that we have overemphasized what might be called political or Bill-of-Rights democracy. . . . Its extreme form leads to exploitation. Russia, perceiving some of the abuses of excessive political democracy, has placed strong emphasis on economic democracy. . . . Carried to an extreme, all power is centered in one man. . . . Somewhere there is a practical balance between economic and political democracy. . . . The chief difference between the economic organization of Russia and that of the United States is that it is almost impossible to live on income-producing property in Russia. . . . In present-day Russia, differences in wage income are almost but not quite as great as in the United States."

Only Wallace could compress so much falsification, confusion and evasion in so short a space. There is no "economic democracy" in Russia, unless the absence of private ownership be considered *ipso facto* democratic: workers are tied to their jobs, they have no say about wages or working conditions, their unions are company unions. Far from being a way of correcting the abuses of what Wallace calls "excessive political democracy," the Russian economic system is a slave system precisely because there is no political democracy (and who but Wallace would split democracy in half and expect the two halves to live?) Income differences in Russia are considerably *greater* than in this country. The chief difference between the two systems, from the worker's standpoint, is that in the USA he has *some* freedom of movement and *some* power to protect his interests, while in the USSR he has none. Has Russian "economic democracy" been carried to the extreme where "all power is centered in one man" or has it not? Wallace neglects to say. He is also disingenuous when he pretends to be holding the scales evenly between the two systems. His speech lists five kinds of democracy: political, economic, ethnic, educational and sexual. Rigged this way, the contest adds up in Wallace's box score: USSR 3, USA 1, with one game (sexual) tied.

In the spring of 1944, Roosevelt sent Wallace on a "goodwill" mission to China and Soviet Asia. (Wallace is the ideal envoy for such empty pilgrimages.) Never has one man learned so little from so much travel. In *Soviet Asia Mission* (1946), Wallace describes his trip. He begins by thanking eight individuals for their assistance in preparing the book; four names I don't recognize; the four I do are all Stalinoids of long standing. Before he left the USA, Wallace knew just what he would find in Soviet Asia:

"It is with great anticipation that I approach the Siberian experience. . . . Over 40,000,000 people have taken the place of the 7,000,000—mostly convicts—who miserably existed there under Imperial Russia. So the detractors of Russia must pause before the fact of Soviet Asia of today. . . . I shall see the cities. I shall feel the grandeur that comes when men work wisely with nature."

The rest of the book lives up to the opening. There are rhapsodies about collective farming which almost convince one that Wallace doesn't even know anything about agriculture. Compulsion everywhere appears to him as the spontaneous will of the people. At Krasnoyarsk he notes: "The war-bond drive has been well-organized, for he [the Soviet officer in charge] said that purchases by the employees averaged 12% of their earnings. 'Often,' he added, 'patriotic individuals turn in all their savings.' " Apparently unaware that the NKVD is the chief recruiter of labor-power for Soviet Asia,, he approvingly quotes another local chieftain: "I could use a million people right now in the Amur region." At Irkutsk he makes a speech comparing modern Siberia with the 19th century American frontier and declaring that "men born in wide free spaces will not brook injustice" and "will not even temporarily live in slavery." As noted above, Wallace thinks that under the Czar the inhabitants of Siberia were "mostly convicts" whereas today they are free-hearted Soviet pioneers. The actuality is the reverse: the Czarist deportations were on a minuscle scale compared to the long trains of cattle-cars crammed with millions of "kulaks" and "anti-social elements" (including grandmothers and babes in arms) that have poured labor-power, in the form of political exiles, year after year into Stalin's Siberia.* "I can bear witness,"

* Cf. *Russia in Perspective* (1947) by George Soloveytchik, which cites the definitive study of Czarist deportations, George Kennan's *Siberia and the Exile System* (1891). Kennan's two

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

continued Wallace to the assembled and stupefied prison-camp wardens of Irkutsk, "I can bear witness to the willingness with which your citizens give their utmost efforts in mines, aircraft factories, and metallurgical works."

There are two references to Trotsky in the book. (1) " 'This kind of thing,' he [a local official] said, referring to the new towns we had seen, 'this kind of thing, Trotsky was against.' " (2) "I was interested to hear that on this issue [collectivization of agriculture] Stalin and Trotsky were in fundamental disagreement. Dimitri Chavakhim of the Soviet Foreign Affairs Office explained it this way: 'Trotsky wanted to make peace with the kulaks. . . .' "

The book contains various "messages" to the people of Russia from "the American People" (i.e., Wallace, or rather his ghost-writer). It also contains "My Message to the American People."

The Madison Square Garden Speech

On September 12, 1946, Wallace spoke to a Stalinoid audience in New York City's Madison Square Garden. After a preliminary plea for "peace"—in which he characteristically noted: "I say this as one who steadfastly backed preparedness throughout the thirties. We have no use for namby-pamby pacifism."—he developed the main body of his argument:

"We may not like what Russia does in Eastern Europe. Her type of land reform, industrial expropriation and suppression of basic liberties offends the great majority of the people of the United States. On our part, we should recognize that we have no more business in the political affairs of Eastern Europe than Russia has in the political affairs of Latin America, Western Europe and the United States. But whether we like it or not, the Russians will try to socialize their sphere of influence, just as we try to democratize our sphere of influence. . . .

"Russian ideals of social-economic justice are going to govern nearly a third of the world. Our ideas of free-enterprise democracy will govern much of the rest. . . . By mutual agreement, this competition should be put on a friendly basis, and the Russians should stop conniving against us in certain areas just as we should stop scheming against them in other parts of the world. . . .

"Once the fears of Russia and the United States have been allayed by practical regional political reservations, I am sure that concern over the veto power will be greatly diminished. Then the United Nations would have a really great power in those areas which are truly international and not regional. In the world-wide, as distinguished from the regional field, the armed might of the United Nations should be so great as to make opposition useless. . . . In brief, as I see it, today, the world order is bankrupt, and the United States, Russia and England are the receivers. These are the hard facts of power politics on which we have to build a functioning, powerful United Nations and a body of international law. As we build, we must develop fully the doctrine of the rights of small nations."

Wallese has seldom reached greater heights. An ideal world is to be built on power politics; the United Nations are to rule everywhere except where the big powers don't want them to; the "world order" is bankrupt and the Big Three are the only real forces today; therefore they "must" protect the rights of small nations—except in "regional" areas, that is in the one-third of the world which "Russian ideas . . . are going to govern" and "much of the rest" which *our* ideas will rule. This leaves Patagonia and possibly the headwaters of the Niger as the field of action of the United Nations.

The political heart of the speech is the delicate term, "practical regional political reservations," by which is meant simply spheres of influence. The former One Worlder proposes now Two Worlds, since this is more to Russia's advantage at the present moment. Wallace's proposal is analagous to those of the old pro-Nazi isolationists: let Hitler (Stalin) run his sphere, while we run ours; of course, the Nazi (Soviet) "ideals of socio-economic justice" are not ours, but there is room in the world for both, etc., etc. This attitude is immoral because it accepts evil—the Nazi (or Soviet) horrors—as a status quo to be let alone, for expediency's sake, by people whose own ethical concepts are alleged to be different and better. It is also as clearly opposed to the national interest of American imperialism as was the pro-Nazi line. In this sense, Wallace is an American fifth-columnist. Now, unlike the patriotic editors of *The New Leader* and *Partisan Review*, I don't get very indignant about fifth-columnists, my admiration of the American form of government being less ardent than theirs. But it is hypocrisy for Wallace to present his program as one of friendly cooperation between USA and USSR, when it is actually unilateral, giving USA nothing it hasn't got already and giving USSR all it wants at present (and hasn't yet got): a free hand in the vast new sphere of influence she has acquired since the end of the war. This is simply appeasement a la Munich, and would not cause Stalin to behave any more "cooperatively" than it did Hitler—or than Roosevelt's enormous and foolish concessions at Teheran and Yalta did.

Wallace's "regional" proposal shocked his Latin American admirers.* Their outcries at this "betrayal" by the apostle of Good Neighborliness reached such volume that Wallace went on the air a week later and tried to take it all back, "reaffirming" his One World creed and adding,

main findings: (1) in the 64-year period, 1823-1887, the total number of exiles deported to Siberia was 772,979; (2) of these the great majority were non-political criminals and their families (who went *voluntarily*, not, as under Stalin, compulsorily), the total number of "politicals banished by administrative process" being for the representative period 1879-1884, exactly 749! If we take the lowest estimate that has been made of the number of persons sent into exile by the Stalin regime—10 million—we find that in 20 years Stalin has exiled 13 times as many persons as the Czars did in 64 years. And furthermore that practically all of Stalin's exiles were *political* deportees, as against less than 1 per cent of the Czars' exiles.

* These are, or were, numerous. Perhaps no American political leader has been so popular as Wallace in Latin America. His two Good Will tours were great successes: he was not only obviously full of Good Will but he had even taken the trouble to learn Spanish. The intelligentsia were especially charmed, but it is hard for the intellectuals of semicolonial lands to be critical about an American or Englishman who flatters and conciliates them. Let us not forget, for example, that in Latin America the greatest living American writer is generally considered to be Waldo Frank.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I wish to emphasize that any regionalism . . . must take into account the rights of small nations."

The comedy of errors which followed this speech is well known: how Truman first told reporters he had read the speech in advance and approved it; how he then said he had not approved the speech but merely Wallace's right to give it; how Wallace went to Truman and agreed to keep quiet on foreign policy until the Paris Conference ended (presumably in return for being kept in the cabinet); and how finally Truman, under pressure from Byrnes, called for Wallace's resignation.

THUS in three major instances since last summer, Wallace has supported Russian foreign policy: the controversy with Baruch on atomic control; the Madison Square speech; the recent European trip. His present line is that the USA and the USSR can get along together if neither gets "tough," that each should work within the United Nations and not go off on its own imperialist tangent. But a year ago, when it was *Russia* that was being tough, when it was *Russia* that was wrecking the U.N. by obstructive vetoes, when it was *Russia* that was taking the diplomatic offensive everywhere—a year ago Wallace showed no public concern about harmony and unity and moderation. His philippics about aggression and imperialism were stimulated only when his own country counter-attacked. It is not true that Henry Wallace is an agent of Moscow. But it is true that he behaves like one.

The result has been that in the last year Wallace has more and more isolated himself not only from the Democratic Party and not only from the man-in-the-street but even from the liberal-labor movement. The formation last January of Americans for Democratic Action was the most significant split in that movement that has occurred in many years. It was a direct retort to the union, a few days earlier, of the National Citizens Political Action Committee and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions* into the Progressive Citizens of America, with Henry Wallace as their chief spokesman. The only issue separating ADA from PCA is the Russian issue: PCA, like its parents NSPAC and ICCASP, is firmly controlled by the Stalinoids; ADA is not only critical of Russian foreign policy but also bars Communists from membership. The interesting thing is that ADA, the newcomer, has attracted practically all the "big" liberal names, from Mrs. Roosevelt to Leon Henderson and Chester Bowles, and including a half-dozen top trade union leaders. Also including Harold Ickes, who last spring accepted the chairmanship of ICCASP, pooh-poohing friends who warned him it was Communist controlled, and who quietly resigned last fall after several unhappy experiences had convinced him that the warnings had been accurate. It has taken the liberals a long time to learn the facts of life about Stalinism—the present clash between American and Russian national interests has wonderfully speeded up the process—but they seem to be learning them at last. This puts Wallace in a most difficult position. Also the new *New Republic*, which aspires to be read by the general public but may even cease to be read by the liberal minority.

7. Corn-Fed Mystic

A FRIENDLY observer describes a scene in 1933 when a business delegation called on Wallace to discuss AAA: "Wallace listened with about as much animation as a hitching post. . . . A fat and rather disagreeable member said that God himself couldn't make AAA work. Instantly, Wallace was standing straight with raised head. He spoke easily, his eyes flashed. "I have faith that Divine Providence will provide a means to fit the times!' "[9] One suspects that not the least of those means was to be Henry Wallace. Just as he thinks of America as the nation destined by God to lead the world, so Wallace thinks of himself as a Messiah, an instrument through which God will guide America onward and upward.

Messiah Manque'

This feeling comes out strongly in *Statesmanship and Religion* (1934), a curious work in which the Old Testament prophets are pictured as New Dealers struggling against "the standpatters worshipping Baal" (Rep.). Especially when he denies it: "I trust we shall never have to have a prophet like Elisha, who stirred up Jehu to bloody revolution. . . . It is interesting to note that Jehu formed a compact with the Rechabites, the communists of that day. . . . Yes, I trust we shall not need Elishas and Jehus and Rechabites to cure the evils of this civilization by causing blood to flow in the streets." Wallace is a kindly man, yet I think we may detect a note of satisfaction in the idea of curing social evils by bloodshed if the stiff-necked sons of Baal refuse to listen to reason; and if an Elisha is needed, Wallace seems not reluctant to play the role (he has already made the compact with the Rechabites). When farmers would not listen to his program in the twenties, he told a friend: "I guess we haven't suffered enough yet."[10] The theme is repeated in *Statesmanship and Religion*: "Perhaps the times will have to be even more difficult before the hearts of our people will have

* For Wallace, as for many others, these two groups were important "transmission belts" to the Communist apparatus. C. B. ("Beaney") Baldwin, executive head of NCPAC and a former top aide of Wallace in Agriculture, is a prominent fellow-traveller; through him, his close friend, Lee Pressman, the CIO's Stalinoid legal counsel, has been able to influence Wallace. Hannah Dorner, the national executive director of ICCASP, is an even more important link. She is said to have gotten him to endorse Johannes Steel, an unfortunate error which one of Wallace's associates explained: *Henry just can't resist when Hannah calls him up.* (See *Time*—Sept. 9, 1946, pp. 23-25—for a good account of ICCASP, including Hannah's classic reply to charges of undue Communist influence: "Says who and so what? If the ICCASP program is like the Communist line, that is purely coincidental.")

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been moved sufficiently so they will be willing to join together in a modern adaptation of the theocracy of old." This theocracy is to be based on "a revival of deep religious feeling" that will "grow side by side with a new social discipline." A less attractive form of society could hardly be imagined.

Yet there seems in Wallace a suspicion—happily justified—that he lacks something that the Old Testament prophets had. "Of course, the outstanding characteristic of the prophets which is lacking today," he observes, "is that intensity of conviction which enabled them to say: 'Thus saith the Lord!' "[11] He adds that only three men in the 20th century have had this "tremendous earnestness": Lenin, Hitler and Mussolini. We may be grateful that Wallace is not a Lenin, or even a Mussolini. He would like to be: he is willing to be ruthless; he has an enormous drive for personal power; he is constantly fumbling around for a total political doctrine. But his personality is not integrated enough to enable him to stick to a few basic ideas and reject others; he is, fortunately, a dilettante, fearful of getting in too deep, and an opportunist who would be all things to all men. He has never been able to carry out his own prescription: "The problem of statesmanship is to mold a policy leading toward a higher state for humanity and to stick by that policy and make it seem desirable in spite of short-term political pressure to the contrary."[12] One suspects that the very violence and frequency of Wallace's statements of high principle are primarily attempts to assure himself that he *does* have convictions.

From Calvinism to the Occult

Wallace was raised in the strictest of Calvinist churches: the United Presbyterian. When he grew up, he tells us, he was repelled by the dogmatism of the creed and the dry intellectualism of the sermons. Dropping into a high Episcopalian service, he found that the ritual moved him deeply. So in 1931, he became a high Episcopalian, a characteristic compromise between Calvinism and Roman Catholicism. He led bible classes, became an acolyte. "For months, wearing a cassock and surplice, he knelt at the altar on Sunday and regularly served 8 o'clock mass."[13]

Formal religion, however, is not the important part of Wallace's abundant other-worldly life. He delights especially in esoteric knowledge, strange creeds in which the scientific and the supernatural are blended. "His faith . . . seems to be an amalgam of Buddhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedhanism, and Eddyism."[14] To which might be added: theosophy, spiritualism, numerology, and astrology. "Wallace dabbles in astrology and can draw a horoscope. He is quite familiar with the theory that the future can be predicted from certain markings on the Great Pyramid." There is some confusion, as always in trying to define Wallace's beliefs, as to whether his interest in this mystic lore is that of the speculative scientist or the convert. Most writers, though not all, believe it to be the latter; I agree with the majority. Paul Appleby, who served as Wallace's personal assistant in the early years in Agriculture, once remarked: *I don't dare let a theosophist in to see Henry—he'd give him a job right away. I have to be careful, or the place would be overrun with them.* Milo Perkins was running a theosophist church in Houston, Texas, when he first met Wallace.

Wallace's leanings towards esoteric doctrines have not helped him politically, for there is a widespread feeling in this country—one which I do not share—that such doctrines are absurd in themselves. It must be admitted, however, that Wallace's use of them—like his expositions of more secular doctrines—has generally been foolish.

The Roerich Story

After the 1934 drought, Wallace sent an expedition to the Orient to look for certain drought-resistant grasses which were believed to grow in Outer Mongolia and Tibet. The expedition was composed of plant experts from the Department of Agriculture. To head it, Wallace appointed, without consulting any one, a strange and quite undepartmental character named Nicholas Roerich, promoter of a vague enterprise called The Roerich Pact for the Protection of Cultural Treasures and the Promotion of World Peace. Roerich was also a painter of mystical pictures, a White Russian, and a bit of an adventurer. The talk around the Department was that Roerich had persuaded the Secretary, who was at that period much interested in his ideas, that somewhere on those remote mysterious plains would be found evidence of the Second Coming of Christ, and that Wallace had decided to combine business with pleasure. It speedily became evident that, whatever Roerich might know about the Second Coming, his knowledge of botany was sketchy. Friction developed between Roerich and the prosaic plant experts under his command. Roerich cabled Wallace demanding he recall the chief expert. Knowles Ryerson, chief of the Bureau of Plant Industry, and one of the country's outstanding plant biologists, backed up his subordinate in the field. Wallace thereupon recalled the subordinate and fired Ryerson. The expedition was finally terminated hastily by the State Department after the Soviet Government had protested against political speeches Roerich had been making while travelling around Mongolia as an official U.S. representative. The whole affair was a dismal fiasco, discovering nothing much about either native grasses or the Second Coming. Some time later, after more experience with Roerich, Wallace acknowledged he had been in the wrong and apologized to Ryerson, who had left the Department to make a successful academic career.

The "Zenda" Letters

The most spectacular result of Wallace's esoteric propensities was the affair of the "Zenda" letters. Let it be said at once that the letters—the damaging ones at least—were *probably* forgeries. The story is worth telling, however, because (1) it is a bit of political history that has been widely talked about but has never been fully told in print; and (2) even the Democrats had to admit that the letters did not clash with the spirit of much that Wallace had indubitably written—*se non è vero, è bene trovato.*

The most extensive printed reference to the affair occurs on page 197 of Charles Michelson's *The Ghost Talks* (1944): "During the 1940 campaign, Harry Hopkins came over to New York highly excited over a big batch of letters of at least doubtful authenticity, supposed to be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from Henry Wallace. Their general purport was silly rather than evil. Hopkins assured us they were forgeries. Doubtless some of them, perhaps all, were fabrications. The Republicans had bought them, we were advised, but were afraid to put them out and could find no publisher daring enough to take the responsibility. . . . Hopkins suggested expedients that would have made admirable chapters in an Oppenheim novel (for he regarded the matter as of tragic importance) but fitted into no conception of practical politics. . . . The opposition could not find a publisher, the Democratic national organization gave them no opening, and so the storm passed without hysteria at headquarters and never figured in the campaign."

Michelson's last statement is hardly true: there was enough "hysteria" to cause him to move the entire Democratic publicity staff into New York to be ready to counterattack if the Republicans used the letters. That the letters were "silly" is also considerable of an understatement. They purported to be written by Wallace to "Zenda," a female astrologer connected with the Roerich Museum (again the Roerich thread!), who had once been on good terms with him but had since quarrelled. About half were written on Department stationery and were signed with Wallace's full name; handwriting experts found these signatures to be genuine; these letters, however, were perfectly harmless—conventional notes thanking Zenda for a book or making some passing comment. It was the other half that were dynamite: these were much longer documents, written in a weird jargon in which code names were used (Roosevelt was "The Great One," Churchill "The Roaring Lion," Russia "The Tiger," etc.); international affairs were indiscreetly commented on, and strange matters were discussed, as how the writer cured himself of headaches at formal Senatorial dinners—a low opinion of Senators was indicated—by passing a Tibetan amulet over his forehead; and the mystic potency of certain symbols, including the Christian cross, the Mongolian lama's reliquary and the Indian medicine man's charms (the Catholics would have not been pleased by such a juxtaposition). These letters, unhappily for the Republicans, were not on Wallace's letterhead (though the paper bore the Department's watermark), and they were signed not with his name but with two code initials.

The Republican National Committee bought the letters from "Zenda" and turned them over to two friendly newspaper publishers, Roy Howard and Paul Block, who assigned two of their best men to prepare a series of articles about the letters. The plan was to release the series, free, to every daily in the country. Roosevelt's health was generally known to be frail, nor did the Republican propagandists let the public forget his peculiar slip, just before the Democratic Convention, when he told the press that he hoped Wallace would become "the next president of the United States." The Republicans thought the fear of an infidel crackpot becoming president might swing the election for them.

The Democrats heard about the letters more or less by chance—a fact which irritated Harry Hopkins, who was proud of the espionage network he had built up. *Why wasn't I told about this?* he exclaimed to friendly newspapermen. *I've got my people in every newspaper office in the country!* Like most of the Democratic chieftains, Hopkins took the "Zenda" threat very seriously. One of the few who refused to get ruffled was Roosevelt himself, who cracked, when Anna Rosenberg rushed down to Washington with the news: *Hell, couldn't we prove that Henry slept with the woman?*

The Rooseveltean intuition proved accurate. The delightful vision faded to a mirage before the Republicans' eyes. Howard backed out when his handwriting experts reported that, although the initials signed to the compromising letters (which were typed) resembled Wallace's handwriting, there was not enough to go on for a definite verdict. As a last resort, Block dispatched Ray Sprigle, of the *Pittsburgh Post-Dispatch* to track down Wallace, who was then campaigning in the West, and ask him if the letters were genuine.* Getting wind of Sprigle's trip, the Democrats sent out an emissary who got to Wallace first and doubtless gave him some good advice. When Sprigle arrived, Wallace laughed the whole thing off as an ancient hoax: *Are those things still kicking around? She's been trying to peddle them for years.* And that was the end of Zenda.

Garlic and Soybeans

When Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture, he introduced into the Weather Bureau advanced methods of forecasting, including airplane observations and certain refined statistical methods he himself had worked out. At the same time, he was deep in correspondence with an Indian medicine-man who had pretensions as a rain-maker.

This kind of contradiction runs all through Wallace's personality. If mysticism attracts him, so does science—and especially that crudely materialistic and pragmatic kind of science which might be called "scientism." Mysticism and Scientism: the link may be that both approach life at a higher, or lower, level than the human: both are *impersonal* philosophies which seem to offer a way of bypassing the complexities and subtleties of human existence. Just as Wallace's mysticism is really *folk* mysticism, so he goes in for folk-scientific doctrines. His lifelong concern about diet is the most striking instance. One of the participants in the January 10 radio broadcast reproduced here last month says that the one topic which Wallace wanted to discuss, as they were sitting around waiting to go on the air, was not economic democracy or the atombomb but his most recent discovery: the marvelous properties of garlic. Wallace is, in short, a "health crank"— a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon form of eccentricity. He is a vegetarian, a teetotaler, and, in his youth at least, an intrepid self-experimenter. At college, he went in for all kinds of stomach-turning regimens, with the laudable purpose of finding a diet which would sustain human life for 5c a day. He was, unhappily, not successful. He tried living on

* Curiously, no one, including the harrassed Democrats, had thought of so direct an approach to the "Zenda" problem—perhaps because every one assumed that Wallace had actually written the letters. Hopkins had set a special corps to reviewing every published word of Wallace, to see if the style and content of the "Zenda" letters harmonized with Wallace's previous lucubrations. The results were said to have been discouraging if not downright alarming.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nothing but rice, and got scurvy. He tried a diet of milk and popcorn, but found it unpalatable after a while. He tried a hideous goulash of soybeans, rutabagas, corn and cottonseed meal, but lost heart after a week. He tried fasting, which at first produced splendid results; but he got hungry. At one point, his experiments laid him up in the hospital to recuperate.[16]

Another cult for which Wallace goes in is athleticism. He not only plays a fanatical game of tennis; he is also fond of Indian wrestling, volley-ball, squash, and even, *if* all else fails, plain setting-up exercises. He has made himself an expert in boomerang throwing, which, as the most dialectical of sports since the starting-point is also the finish-line, fits in neatly with his personality. He always prefers to walk from the railroad station to his hotel, if possible carrying two heavy suitcases. There is sometimes an element of showing-off involved in Wallace's superman exhibitions, as when he refused a respirator during the high-level flight from Alaska to Siberia on his Far Eastern trip (he survived, to the astonishment of the others), or when, on one of his Latin American tours, he insisted on playing two sets of tennis as soon as he had arrived at Quito, the capital of Ecuador, a city of such elevation above sea-level that new arrivals find a short walk exhausting.

Some political and psychological speculations suggest themselves. *Political*: Bernard Shaw* and Upton Sinclair come to mind as other instances of health-faddism among Leftists. It may be "no accident," as we used to say in the old days when things appeared simpler than they do now, that all three are highly uncritical of Stalinism. It may be that, in trying to reduce their own personal regimens to the simplest, most mechanical-materialist level, they exhibit a kind of shallow rationalism which is insensitive to human values and so can see in the Russian horrors simply a planned and rationalized society. There is something inhuman about health cranks, as there is something inhuman about the kind of people whose deepest emotions are stirred by animals. (Wallace, the apologist for Stalinism, won't hunt or fish because he hates to see animals die.) They try to solve the human tragedy at its lowest biological level, which is not different in kind from the "planning" methods of the Russian bureaucracy. *Psychological*: An element of masochism is perhaps involved in Wallace's dietary and athletic experiments; here as in other aspects of his personality, a Freudian analysis might be interesting. Also is it not probable that, unable to bring his mental processes into effective order and harmony, Wallace finds an easy solace in controlling his digestion and his muscles?

"When Henry introduced me to boomerang throwing," Supreme Court Justice Jackson states, "I thought it was good fun and very interesting the way they came back, and that was enough for me. But not for Henry. He began by reading everything he could find on the history of boomerangs and their use among primitive tribes. Then he plunged into aerodynamics. . . . He had to find out *why* they act the way they do."[17] Wallace is as notably curious about *things*—his corn breeding, dietary experiments, and statistical work are examples—as he is incurious about *people*. In this latter category I include politics, about which, both as to theory and current events, he appears to be extraordinarily uninterested; at least, his ignorance of such matters as recent Marxist theory and elementary information about the Soviet Union are of such proportions as to make the assumption of lack of interest by far the most flattering to him.

8. A Man Divided Against Himself

HENRY WALLACE is not one man but two—and two people of such conflicting personalities that they would find it difficult to live inside the same house together, let alone inside the same skin. This is the key to his failure as a political leader, to his confusion in thought and ineffectiveness in action.

Henry Wallace No. 1 is a mystic, an amateur of esoteric doctrines, a man of profound moral convictions, an idealistic visionary whose eyes are fixed on a distant future, who shows a Hamlet-like indecision in action, and who lives only for great principles.

Henry Wallace No. 2 is an opportunist, adapting himself to the pressures of the moment, ready to foreswear his deepest convictions for immediate gain, a "practical politician," an extreme example of the American pragmatist, interested in "facts" rather than "theories," in statistics rather than values.

The co-existence of extremes in one personality is not damaging in itself: many temperaments derive their energy from the harmonized tension between extremes. But Wallace lacks the creative "middle term" which modulates between extremes and brings them into some kind of harmony. There is no connection between the two sides of his personality, so that *either* one *or* the other at any given moment expresses itself, but never a synthesis. Compromise is Wallace's substitute for synthesis, and he is genuinely surprised when it turns out to be an unacceptable substitute.

Lacking the psychological mechanism to modulate between values and action, the general and the particular, emotion and reason, and any number of other antinomies, Wallace can only alternately express the two sides of his nature, thinking one moment like a Tibetan seer and the next like a cost accountant, acting one moment like St. Francis of Assisi and the next like Boss Hague.

* Who wired his fellow-Fabians at the Society's diamond jubilee last fall: THE ONLY MESSAGE I HAVE FOR THE MOMENT IS THAT THE FABIAN SOCIETY, HAVING MADE RUSSIA A GREAT FABIAN STATE, HAS NOW TO MAKE WALLACE SUCCEED FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Politics of Contradiction

In his political utterances Wallace contradicts himself so frequently that it is the rule, not the exception.

¶ He can achieve contradiction even in a single brief utterance. Three instances: (1) "No, I refuse to have the efficiency of the American farmer maligned, even though I know that he could do an almost infinitely better job than he does."[18] (2) "The Communists are the high priests of Materialistic Inevitability. I am always suspicious of any thing labelled inevitable. . . . They [the common people] can bide their time; the inevitable swing of the pendulum will give them their opportunity."[19] (3) "The supreme freedom is the freedom of the people to know the truth. . . . For the peace and prosperity of the world, it is more important for the public to know the liberal truth than the reactionary truth. Perhaps some day all of us will be strong enough to stand the real truth."[20]

¶ The reason for these contradictions is that Wallace always wants to get *everything* in: there are three mutually exclusive concepts of truth in the 52 words of the last quotation, for example. One of his former ghost-writers told me that Wallace was easy to work with except that he always wanted to repeat the whole book in each chapter; he seemed to dread exposing himself by making one point at a time. This compulsion becomes extreme in his final chapters, which are always in soft focus—fuzzy goodwill toward all men and everything in general, i.e., toward nobody and nothing in particular.

¶ The note is struck in the preface to his earliest book, *Agricultural Prices* (1920): "I may say that I hold to no particular philosophy of economics. . . . One reason for the writing of this book is the belief that organized farmers and organized labor, working in conjunction with certain idealists, will make an effort to modify our present price-registering system. We are heartily in sympathy with such an effort, for the speculative system is far from perfect. But . . . " There follows a demonstration that the speculative system, while not perfect, is pretty good. (A doctoral thesis could be written on the use of the word, "but," in the writings of Henry Wallace.)

¶ In *America Must Choose* (1934), Wallace proposes an economic policy for the USA. His argument: if we choose isolation and high tariffs, we will lose the farm export market and must withdraw 50 million acres of land from cultivation; if we go internationalist, we must lower tariffs enough to let in another billion dollars worth of imports, which will dislocate industry. His solution: split the difference—take 25 million acres out of production, let in half a billion exports. The pamphlet, precisely because, despite its title, it avoided a choice, pleased almost everybody and was the most popular thing Wallace wrote until his wartime speeches, which also pleased almost everybody. Charles A. Beard, however, was not pleased. In *The Open Door at Home* (1935), he wrote: "Wallace's program . . . for agriculture is to force dislocations and readjustments in industry. . . . Likewise, on their side, industrialists have shown themselves willing to dislocate agriculture. . . . In other words . . . politics is to continue as an open struggle among special interests, with what long-term outcome for the nation no one knows, although the present impasse in which such a struggle has eventuated is well-known." On which Wallace commented: "I must confess it is a little disturbing to find Beard looking on my middle-course proposal as special interest. It had seemed to me that the dislocations caused to agriculture and to industry were about even under this proposal."[21] Obtuseness could hardly go farther: Beard points out that a split-the-difference compromise between special interests is merely a form of the traditional pressure-group politics that have brought on the present dilemma; Wallace replies: but *both* parties are injured. Since his own personality is one in which clashing principles are never synthesized but merely given free rein against each other, Wallace applies the same rule to social problems. Paul Ward once noted: "Wallace . . . has at bottom only two things to say: 'This hurts me more than it does you.' . . . And: 'Two wrongs don't make a right, but they help a lot.' "[22] The same kind of thinking produced Wallace's spheres-of-influence policy last summer: let Russia dominate Eastern Europe, while we run Latin America. Out of these imperialist hunting-preserves will come freedom for the oppressed, out of these two worlds will come One World.

¶ One of the most extraordinary of Wallace's books is *The American Choice* (1940). Extraordinary because, even at that late date, he still seems to think in isolationist terms; there is none of that democratic-internationalist note stressed in his later wartime speeches. Possibly the fact that Russia was still allied to Germany was responsible. The most remarkable part of the book is the strategy it proposes for dealing with Germany. This is simply to create a stronger totalitarian empire than the Nazis. "We must at any sacrifice build up not only an armed defense but an economic defense, both internal and in some part hemispheric, until we are strong enough, economically and militarily, to do business with Germany and its subject states, and to do that business in a way that will be safe for us. . . . Against Hitler's total warfare we must oppose a total defense. This will involve sacrifices . . . conscription . . . the exactions and restraints of an economy that . . . must become more nearly self-contained and more closely subject to self-imposed controls. . . . Even if Germany wins, there is nothing wrong about trading with a German-controlled Europe after the war, so long as we conduct that trade in a way which strengthens our American way of life and our national security." The formula for preserving "our American way of life" is to imitate the Nazi form of life, but voluntarily and taking care to label it "democracy." "There is possible a democratic self-discipline which serves the general welfare but leaves free the soul of man. . . . This does not mean that we must reconcile ourselves to regimentation. A people may submit to laws and regulations of their own devising and still be joyous and free."

¶ During the war, Wallace more than perhaps any other leader justified the bloody struggle on the grounds of the splendid future which victory would insure. But when an interviewer asked him to define his postwar visions, Wallace shied off: "That's not a thing an executive should be thinking about these days. It's like a boy in the middle of a football game letting the dance that night take his mind off playing. We've got a war to win first."[23] Since

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Henry had been urging his teammates to win the game in order to hold the dance afterward, it was relevant to inquire whether the dance would be a success or—as it has turned out—a flop. But he was here clearly in his "executive," or BEW, mood; and as an executive he stressed the present and minimized the future, just as, in his role of "people's century" rhetorician, he reversed the process. This political dichotomy—and who but Wallace could throw himself so wholeheartedly into two such contradictory roles?—reflects a psychological split. Since for Wallace there is no integration between duty (the job, war) and enjoyment (play, peace), he suppresses his own personal drives and desires in order to play a public role. The divided man means the alienated man—alienated from his own spontaneous nature and from his fellows. Compare, for example, Wallace with another Common Man's friend: Gandhi. The one all abstract, vague, impersonal; the other concrete, sharp, personal. The one feeding us on windy generalizations, set speeches which correspond to his wholesale "planning" approach to people; the other's political prose style, like Tolstoy's, always precise, homely, concrete, dealing with personal interests. The one issuing marching orders for the Century of the Common Man; the other giving advice—as he has done in his fascinating weekly, *Harijan*—to a businessman who wants to be honest *and* successful or to a young woman whose virtue is besieged by Congress Party libertines. When Wallace wants people to do something, he makes a speech or writes a book; when Gandhi does, he does it himself—as in his campaign against the salt tax.

"A Cold Fish"

When Wallace was up for confirmation as Secretary of Commerce, several Senators voted against him just because they thought he was "a cold fish." They complained that as Vice-President he had presided over them for four years but that he had not tried to get to know them, nor had he invited them into his office to "strike a blow for liberty" as had been the custom of his reactionary but genial predecessor, Cactus Jack Garner. This may appear a childish reason for rejecting a cabinet member. As it may appear trivial that Frank Kingdon, in his campaign biography of Wallace, admits that his hero is incapable of small talk. Or that on Wallace's 1944 Far Eastern trip, he is said to have kept aloof from his plane companions, never joining in a drink (he doesn't drink, thank you) or a smoke (he doesn't smoke, thank you), and brooding over his cracked wheat in spiritual solitude; the result being that, after many weeks of close contact, the whole company—diplomats, officers and enlisted men alike—were heartily glad to see the last of the Common Man's Friend.

It will be said that Wallace is just not "a good mixer," but I think it goes deeper. His shyness does not mask a clumsy, inhibited warmth; it is rather the awkwardness of a man confronted by something he neither understands nor likes very well. And that something is people—the Common Man, not generically but individually. This obtuseness has cost Wallace a lot in his political career: perhaps no other lack has been so damaging. He is constantly getting involved with characters like Harold Young and David Karr, whom he hopes to use to compensate for his lack of understanding of people, but who turn out to be catastrophic illustrations of that very lack. It is significant that when he left the Department of Agriculture, he did not make any recommendations as to personnel to his successor. This was high-minded, but perhaps a little too high-minded; perhaps it showed a lack of interest in the men he had worked with for eight years. When he took over the Department of Commerce, he took along with him only one major aide, the ineffable Harold Young. And when he went to *The New Republic,* he left the selection of the editorial staff entirely to Straight.

Wallace loves humanity, but only *en masse;* he is interested in people, but only as units in statistical tables; the individual has to be raised to a higher power by multiplication before he "counts." Thus he does not read novels, plays or poems; unless a book has footnotes and statistical tables, he suspects it is "a waste of time." One of his aides in Agriculture once tried to get him to read novels on the practical ground that they would show him how people "work" and so enable him to deal more effectively with them. Wallace agreed that he would like to be smarter about people, and he did read a few novels recommended by his aide. Not only was he bored, but he could not believe that they weren't "a waste of time" even for this utilitarian purpose. He went back to books with tables in them.

It is remarkable how many men who have worked closely with Wallace and have "believed in him" feel let down, even betrayed. There is something abnormal, even monstrous, about Wallace's personality, they will tell you. He seems to be deficient not only in surface warmth but also in the deeper qualities of loyalty, affection and sympathy which more intimate relationships demand. Men who have thought they could count on his friendship have found instead, when a test came, egotism and coldness. The friend of humanity in general turns out to be the friend of nobody in particular.

You can get an idea of what Henry lacks, a former close associate told me, *if you compare him with Jesse Jones. I had no use for Jones—he was a black reactionary, a man of narrow intelligence and few scruples. But, by God, when you finally pinned down the bastard, when you got him to agree to something, you knew he would stand by it, regardless of any pressure or afterthoughts. Now Henry was my kind of guy in every way—but you never knew when he was going to change his mind on you. You could trust Jones—once he committed himself, you knew where he stood. With Henry, you never really knew. And Jones never let down a subordinate. If you carried out his policies loyally, he would stick by you through hell and high water. As for Henry, well. . . .*

"L'Homme de Papier"

Just as he thinks of people *en masse;* so Wallace relates himself to them in terms of crowds, whether crowds physically present in a meeting hall or conceptually present as objects of the mass media of communication.

Unlike Hitler, Roosevelt and other modern demagogues, Wallace is not adept at manipulating physical crowds. Despite years of public speaking, he is still unable to project himself effectively or to dominate a living audience.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rather, his relation to such an audience is passive: he is "a sucker for applause"—or for booing. His mood soars or drops mercurially depending on the reaction of the crowd he is addressing. A comic instance occurred during the elections last fall. On November 4, the eve of election day, Wallace gave three speeches for Mead in Brooklyn. The first was poorly attended (about 400) and the audience was listless; depressed, Wallace made political history by predicting the defeat of his own candidate: "I know that Senator Mead is not going to win." The second was big (3500) and lively; with engaging naivete, Wallace told his audience that its enthusiasm had helped him shake off "that momentary fit of pessimism" and that he now was confident that Mead would win. The third was also big and cheerful, and again Wallace predicted victory. (It turned out his first premonition had been correct.)

Applause is essential to Wallace, perhaps because his image of himself needs constant reassurance. A hostile audience can cause him to change his speech as he goes along, as in the well-known case of last fall's Madison Square Garden speech. A liberal leader has given, privately, a shrewd explanation of Wallace's partiality for the Communists, based on his own experiences at meetings sponsored by regular Democratic groups as against those sponsored by Stalinoid groups. When he speaks at the former, he says, no one pays much attention to him: "I sneak in, make my speech, am politely applauded, and sneak out again." But at Stalinoid meetings, he feels like a hero: a committee rushes down to conduct him triumphantly to his seat on the platform; his speech is punctuated by what the Russian press calls "stormy applause"; at the end there are cheers and the whole audience rises in tribute. "They certainly make you feel important." Evidently, Wallace falls heavily for this sort of thing.

It is with crowds as readers, and not as listeners that Wallace is effective. The French have an expression for the kind of politican who writes a great deal in general but does little in particular: *un homme de papier*. Wallace is also a Man of Paper, emotionally feeding on paper phrases (Economic Democracy, Full Employment, General Welfare, Common Man), nourishing his mind on paper statistics, using paper to insulate him from contact with human reality. He himself is as much a victim of the illusion as his liblab readers, habitually mistaking intentions for achievements, words for actions. His *Sixty Million Jobs,* for example, is a paper castle erected on two bits of campaign oratory by Roosevelt: the "Bill of Economic Rights" which Roosevelt promulgated in 1944, a collection of resonant (and, considering Roosevelt's own admission that the New Deal was dead, cynical) banalities such as "the right to a useful and remunerative job. . . . the right of every family to a decent home . . . the right to a good education." And, second, the "postwar goal" of 60 million jobs which Roosevelt announced in his Chicago campaign speech of October 28, 1944. This last so stirred Wallace that he forgot the recent humiliations he had suffered, as the last New Dealer, at Roosevelt's hands, and wired him: YOUR GOAL OF 60 MILLION JOBS IS PERHAPS HIGH BUT I GLORY IN YOUR DARING. AND AS YOU SAY AMERICA CAN DO THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE. The joke, of course, turned out to be that within a year of the close of hostilities, the economy was booming along at the rate of *over* 60 million jobs—and without any of the New Deal measures Wallace's books had insisted were essential to achieving the "daring" goal (by 1951, incidentally). In fact, the expansion was accompanied by the rapid *lifting* of wartime controls. Wallace's paper castle had collapsed almost before the printer's ink was dry on its pages.

His Image of Himself

Henry Wallace is as distant from himself as from other people. The two things which appear to interest him most deeply and spontaneously are agricultural experiments and mystical doctrines. Yet he has suppressed both interests since 1933, when he went into politics, and since his leaving the Department of Agriculture in 1940, he has not had even an administrative relationship to farming. A journalist asked him in 1942: "Do you think you would ever like to be an editor again?" "I like corn breeding better," he replied.[24] When I saw him at *The New Republic,* I asked him about this. "It's chicken breeding now," he answered, smiling. He carries on experiments at his farm in Katonah, N. Y., like any other businessman with a hobby, but it would be as unthinkable to him as to the businessman to take this hobby "seriously." As for his mystical bent, that is little favored by his Stalinoid audience and so is firmly repressed. Henry Luce's magazines reflect all too accurately their proprietor's religious leanings, but Henry Wallace's magazine conforms to the irreligious canons of liblab journalism. Its symbol is not the mystic three dots within a circle which Wallace once adopted for his own sign, but a patriotic eagle-on-shield device which strikes the Lincolnesque note (it looks as though it came off a Civil War recruiting poster) required for the task at hand.

Even more than most political leaders, Wallace habitually suppresses any "merely" personal values, interests, or enjoyments in order to advance The Cause. It would never occur to him that a connection might be made, or that it would be desirable to make it, between the two. Which is why he appears so lumpish, even depressed as he goes through his political paces, and why, although personally a kindly and well-intentioned man, he has frequently behaved in an unscrupulous way. Furthering The Cause means the building up of an image of himself as a Leader. Here the strands of egotism and altruism become intertwined beyond my ability to untangle them; the result is, however, clear enough: it is the precious image, the public face, which must always be preserved. At the time of the 1935 purge in Agriculture, one of the purgees asked him: *But H. A.—why didn't you at least tell us about it in advance?* To which he replied: *I just couldn't face you.* One suspects that what Wallace couldn't face was not the suffering of his associates, but rather the shattering of his own image, in their eyes, as the great progressive. He is by no means a cold fish so far as this image is concerned: when it is threatened, his emotions are violent. When he left the White House after the most unexpected and brutal blow he has ever received—Roosevelt's abrupt dismissal of him from the BEW—Wallace was in a state of hysterical collapse, weeping openly before the reporters. His emo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions are cosmic-egotistical: he is cold toward individuals, but feels keenly his own sufferings—but "objectively," so to speak: as the trials of the Messiah whom the Lord has chosen as his instrument of communication with the people.*

A Good Man Gone Wrong?

The more charitable of Wallace's critics think he is a pathetic rather than a sinister figure: a man of decent instincts and intellectual ability who has been perverted by political life. I would agree with this, adding that, as noted above, it is Wallace's fallacious concept of politics—which in turn is connected with the neurotic conflicts within himself—which is mostly responsible for the damage. These conflicts disintegrate his own personality, so that he is constantly, without intending anything of the sort, betraying those who believe in him, running out on his own statements, and generally behaving in a way which, were it not so clearly the result of unconscious drives, one would be justified in calling cowardly and dishonest.

Since the major aim of this essay is to consider Wallace as a political leader rather than as a personality, and since his political behavior has very little good to be said for it, the portrait drawn is doubtless blacker than a novelist, say, would draw. In some ways, then, let it be noted, Henry Wallace is an attractive and even admirable person—but let it also be noted that, politically, his virtues, since they are invariably negated by his approach to politics, only make him that much the more dangerous a figure.

Here and there in his books there are passages which show a remarkable awareness of our modern dilemma, as: "I am convinced that behind economics, behind the economic machinery, there are certain truths in the field of philosophy—and behind philosophy in the field of religion—which have to do with the direction of the activities of man; and that these are more important at this stage of the game than economics itself. Unfortunately, because of their nature, it is impossible to evolve a body of facts which are subjected to critical analysis in this particular field."[25] Yet this is the man who, in politics, defends Russian totalitarianism as "economic democracy!"

When he is not making speeches, Wallace occasionally shows a knack for getting at the heart of things with shrewd humor. He compained about the dullness of Washington formal dinners: "Because, by protocol, the seating is ranked, you never get to meet any new folks."[26] During the uproar in the press over the 1933 "murder" of the six million baby pigs, Wallace observed drily. "You'd think the farmers were raising those pigs for *pets*."[27] And at the 1944 CIO convention, where Murray introduced him with the line, "We love him because he is one of us, a common man," Wallace later (and privately) commented, after sharing a sumptuous luncheon with the CIO top leaders: "You common men live well,"[28] But he would no more think of permitting this salty vein to crop up in the solemn wastes of his public utterances than he would go out without his pants.

There are even indications that Wallace has a sense of enjoyment. "I believe that most of us, once the opportunity is afforded, will discover within ourselves a variety of stimulating and pleasant things to do," he once wrote, listing "dreaming" as one of them.

9. The Political Meaning of Henry Wallace

1.

HE is an advertising man's Messiah. This means two things:

(a) Since the citizens of a mass society have no way of knowing the effect on their own interests of the policies of a Leader, it is possible to create an image, an eidolon which promises all things to all men and delivers some things to those in control. Wallace is the product of the people who have manipulated him, skillfully "built him up," written his speeches for him: yesterday, certain New Deal cliques; today, the Stalinists. The imposture deceives even those who work it. I talked with one of the men Wallace "purged" from Agriculture in 1935. Shamefacedly, he confessed that, despite this personal knowledge of the man's quality, he had done his best to get him the vice-presidential nomination at the 1944 Democratic convention. "I worked like a dog for Wallace at Chicago. Damned if I know why now. You get a picture going of what a guy is and you get hooked with that picture." Such illusions die hard. How many liberals—not the rank-and-file readers and listeners, but the insiders, the boys in the know—have been hooked by the picture of Wallace they themselves created?

(b) If this type of Messiah alienates others from their private, personal—hence real—interests and values, it is not to impose *his* values. In fact, a double alienation takes place. The advertising-man's Messiah comes to the people not with an image of his own convictions but with a mirror reflecting what the masses want to see—or rather—what they have been conditioned by the existing culture to want to see. There are other images—of fraternity, spontaneous enjoyment, liberation, rebellion—to which people would also respond, with more difficulty; but those in control of society, whether as industrialists, trade union leaders, or government officials, have every reason to prefer the image built up by our culture as it now exists. A true popular leader would use these more difficult appeals in order to destroy the status-quo culture. He would try to

* The image for which Wallace sacrifices himself and others shows itself quite literally. I recently went through a big collection of newsphotos of Wallace. Almost all fell into two contrasting categories: he was either wildly exhilirated, often with arm thrown high to an unseen crowd, in an embarrassing imitation of Roosevelt's confident grin; or else he was—apparently when the camera caught him unprepared—as sodden and low-spirited as Hoover used to look. A friend who heard him speak at a recent luncheon notes that his usual expression was gloomy and depressed, but that he kept an eye out for the news-photographers, and when one was about to snap-flash, turned on a radiant smile quite unconnected with what he was saying. The effect was rather eerie. Thus the "public figure" becomes part of the news-gathering mechanism, playing the role of the dynamic, optimistic Leader as deliberately as any Hollywood character actor.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arouse similar feelings in others by expressing his own fraternal, rebellious values. The demagogue, however, suppresses his own spontaneous personality just as Hollywood movie-makers suppress theirs, and for the same end: to mirror mass tastes. To lead, he follows.

2.

Since he denies his own personal values, he is insensitive to those of others. In the great modern debate on the individual v. the State, Wallace is far out on the State side. His concept of the Common Man shows this most clearly.

"It directly follows from Wallace's terms that men must *become* 'common' if they are not already so, before they can be united. That is, if in themselves or their conditions of life they happen to have distinguishing characteristics, these must be ignored for political purposes (and, with the mechanization of culture, eventually for *all* purposes—including the vision of self). . . . The 'common man,' moreover, is to be considered only as a consumer in industrial society—not even as producer, which role is infinitely more significant. In the end, if men actually come to see themselves as common, society will contain not men at all, but just so many parts of the total supply of refrigerators, potatoes, newspapers and movie seats. . . . Now to be a mere consumer demands nothing of the *person*—he is given things, his role is passive. If you are without fault, if you are common—you will be given what you need to exist, including a 'job.' The notion of the common man can be summed up: become like everybody else, become nothing. This is a long way from the Western concept of the citizen. One wonders what grandfather 'Uncle Henry' would have made of Henry III's creature."

—"The Faith of Henry Wallace" by David T. Bazelon (*Commentary,* April 1947).

3.

One wonders indeed. As noted in the first part of this article, Uncle Henry was a real person, not an advertising-agency's eidolon. There is pathos in Wallace's own recognition of this difference. "Grandfather was a great and strong man," he remarked on one occasion. And on another: "We modern Wallaces are a dull lot. You must feel like crawling under the carpet when you see me coming."

4.

In the decadence of American "left" politics, Wallace brings everything to a loud discordant finale. His published utterances are a jumbled medley of every popular tune since 1890: the populist anti-Wall-Street tradition; the twin myths of the Farm Boy and the middleclass Free Enterpriser a la Horatio Alger; the industrial unionism of the CIO; the state-capitalist ideas of the New Deal; and the two great international myths of our time: Soviet Collectivism and the War to Make the World Safe for Democracy. In this jangle of old and new ideologies, the rising ones drown out the dying ones, so that Wallace, without any conscious effort on his part—consciousness is not his strong point—has gradually come to orient his politics around the last two. And now that American liberals are confronted with a disharmony between the Soviet myth and the War for Democracy myth, so blatant that even Wallace cannot play both tunes at once, he has been driven to a choice—and has chosen the former. He continues to fiddle away hopefully on all strings, of course: on his recent European trip, which sealed his commitment to the Soviet Myth, he arrived in England with ten dozen eggs from his Katonah farm for British poultry breeders ("You take three inbred Leghorn whites and three Rhode Island reds, crossbreed them, and you have excellent eggs," he explained on disembarking from the plane.) And in Paris he kept insisting, perhaps a bit nervously, that he was just a simple American free enterpriser. But his fortissimo is reserved for other themes. Such grace notes are more and more smothered by the dominant chords of Soviet imperialism.

5.

He is well-fitted for the role he has assumed of late years: to overlay with Common Man rhetoric such unpleasant features of modern life as war and totalitarianism. Lacking in his own personality any connecting tissue between theory and practice, ideal and reality, he is incapable of a critical view: that is, of comparing what he wants with what he gets.* Nothing discourages him, nothing disillusions him. He is incapable of losing faith since he takes it as a matter of course that "ideals" exist on one plane and "reality" on another. Thus it is logically impossible for him to draw conclusions from the failure of the one to harmonize with the other.

6.

In 1936, he wrote: "The power over nature given by science and invention during the 19th century was so great that the idea of 'Progress, Unending and Unlimited' was born. . . . The 19th century gave man a materialistic optimism which was bound to disappear the moment the nations found it necessary to live with each other. . . . The illusion of . . . unlimited progress is now being demonstrated."

In 1945, he wrote: "We, too [like the Victorians] live in an age of incessant progress, and the horizon is much

* A critical approach disturbs him profoundly, as in his comment on Veblen, whom he admired—or rather, wanted to admire—greatly: "Unfortunately, Veblen rarely tried to find a constructive solution. He was satisfied for the most part with analysis. . . . I think there is far more possibility of good in the American businessman than Veblen cared to admit. Since 1915, many of our businessmen, notably the DuPonts, have shown a willingness to put exceedingly large sums of money into scientific research." He might have added that our businessmen have also shown their virtue by paying out billions of dollars in wages, not to mention the splendid support they have given our railroad system—essential to the Common Man's welfare—by paying freight charges. He might also have noted that the DuPonts' post-1915 (significant date!) research expenditures were largely in the munitions field. Not that this would seriously worry him. "The war," he observed in 1942, "the war has brought forth a new type of industrialist who . . . has caught a new vision of opportunities in national and international projects. He is willing to cooperate with the people's government in carrying out socially desirable programs. He conducts these programs on the basis of private enterprise and for private property while putting into effect the people's standards as to wages and working conditions. We shall need the best efforts of such men as we tackle the economic problems of peace."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brighter with opportunity than Lord Macaulay could possibly have envisioned for his England of a century ago."

Why did he change his mind? Not because the events of the intervening decade afforded any ground for optimism about "incessant progress" but on the contrary because they were so horrible that pessimism became dangerous to his faith as a liberal. Thus the doubt-ridden reformer of 1936 became, by the curious dialectics of the situation, the exultant ideologue of the People's Century. The absence of any grounds for optimism, perhaps even hope, forced the development of a factitious optimism which suggests that *euphoria* characteristic of the "high" stages of manic depression. Henry Wallace's psychological degeneration (perhaps disintegration?) in the last decade is more than a personal tragedy; a similar devolution can be traced in the American liberal-labor movement generally.

Appendix: "Common Man" Politics Bryan v. Wallace

HENRY Agard Wallace is often compared to an earlier word-intoxicated demagogue from the prairies: William Jennings Bryan. The parallels are striking. The populist crusade against "Wall Street" which Bryan led from 1896 to 1908 has found its chief modern leader in Wallace. The Great Commoner becomes the prophet of the Common Man. Both teetotalers, both religious, both addicted to biblical imagery, both rhetoricians rather than thinkers or doers, both hated by the rich and ridiculed by the sophisticated, both even sharing the rare distinction of being accused of violating the Logan Act (Bryan was thus attacked during his 1917 peace campaign).

The comparison, however, is unfair to Bryan, who had serious convictions about the interests of the "common people" with whose cause he identified himself, and who was willing to make sacrifices for those convictions. Unlike Wallace, who has never voluntarily relinquished a post of power except to gain a higher one, Bryan resigned, on an issue of principle, the Secretaryship of State. Even that grotesque coda to his long career, the Scopes Trial, has a certain dignity about it. Bryan took his backwoods revivalism seriously: he was willing to defend a fundamentalist position on Darwinism against the formidable Clarence Darrow (who might be said to have made a monkey out of him). Wallace hedges, trying to combine revivalism with scientific enlightenment. Bryan was absurd in his attempt to prove that the Bible is literally and completely true, but one respects his moral courage—and even his intellectual consistency. But how can one respect a man who wants to have *both* God and Darwin on his side?

Bryan's superiority is specially marked on the issues of war and imperialism. Wallace was an uncritical propagandist for World War II, Bryan a consistent opponent of World War I; Wallace has draped imperialism—first American, now Russian—in "common man" rhetoric; Bryan struggled against the imperialism of his day. For all his religiosity, Wallace has never shown any interest in the peace movement, and his only expressed reaction to it, so far as I can discover, is the recent sneer at "namby-pamby pacifism." Bryan was proud to call himself a pacifist—although, like Wallace, there was often a startling gap between his words and his deeds. In 1903 he visited Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polonya and was deeply impressed; he developed after this increasingly in a pacifist direction.* Thus although opposed to the Spanish-American War while it was in the making, as soon as war was declared, he volunteered and led a regiment. While he was Wilson's Secretary of State, he dealt with Latin Americans on the usual armed-force basis, sending the Navy to occupy Vera Cruz and imposing on Nicaragua the treaty which later became the basis for landing the Marines. Yet in the supreme test of World War I, Bryan behaved magnificently; the Secretary of State was the most realistic and level-headed member of the cabinet. He was able to see through the pro-British propaganda which deceived Wilson and Colonel House. He saw the danger in loans to belligerents, for example, and officially declared—for the first time in history—that such loans were inconsistent with the spirit of neutrality. He tried unsuccessfully to get Wilson to protest as strongly against the British blockade as against German submarine warfare, and to warn American citizens off ships carrying munitions. Finally, in the spring of 1915, Bryan reached the reluctant conclusion that Wilson's policy was pro-British and not neutral and that it was leading to war; he resigned the only high position he had ever held in his long and frustrated political career. It is true that, when war was declared, Bryan climbed down from this moral elevation, offering to enlist as a private and even favoring the suppression of free speech and C.O.'s! And that when he died, he was given a military funeral and buried in Arlington—both at his request. All this shows that, like Wallace, Bryan was an unstable and naive personality—and also, at bottom, a good patriotic citizen, who could not understand individual resistance to the State because he believed the State was simply the voice of the people. It makes it all the more significant that the early populist demagogue should have so frequently shown up better in action than the later one.

Bryan's superiority, in a word, was due to historical rather than personal factors. At the turn of the century, populism corresponded to real mass interests and emotions; hence its prophet behaved with some consistency. Populism today is a shell which can be filled with any content, even Stalinism, and hence offers its prophet no guide to behavior. Compare Bryan's and Wallace's audiences. Bryan's favorite platform was the Chatauqua lecture: when he was Secretary of State, he was criticized for continuing to appear on the Chatauqua circuit along with Swiss bell ringers and "Sears, the Taffy Man." The Chatauqua audience was composed of religious-minded, agrarian masses who hated "Wall Street" (Eastern monopoly capitalism) and detested the sophisticated, irreligious culture of the Eastern seaboard. But Wallace's audience is drawn from liberals who are economically well-off and culturally sophisticated. For them, populism is, culturally, a phoney way of making a connection with the inarticulate masses (like Josh

* Tolstoy's account of his discussion with "the remarkably clever and progressive American, Bryan" is interesting; incidentally, it was in this interview that Tolstoy gave the answer to the what-would-you-do-if-you-saw-a-man-torturing-a-child question which I quoted in "Why Destroy Draft Cards?" last issue. (See Merle Curti's excellent monograph, "Bryan and World Peace"; Smith College Studies in History, Vol. 16, No. 3 4, April-July 1931.)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

White's songs) and, politically, a way to engage in world power-politics under attractive slogans. (Huey Long and Father Coughlin were the real populist types of our times, expressing popular interests and passions; they were denounced as fascists—with justification—by the liberal pseudo-populists.)

It is also significant that Bryan's medium was the spoken word, while Wallace's is the written word, and that Bryan was a practical politician, while Wallace is a government administrator who, in politics, is a helpless figurehead manipulated by practical politicians. The orator and the political boss (Bryan controlled the Democratic Party for most of the 1896-1912 period) are types thrown up by the masses and skilled in dealing with them; the administrator is part of the privileged minority, just as the editorialist's appeal is only to this minority. Bryan's first big speech was an oration delivered on the spur of the moment, filling in for a speaker who didn't show up. ("Mary, I have had a strange experience," he told his wife the next morning. "Last night, I found I had power over the audience. I could move them as I chose.") Wallace's first big speech was the Free World address in 1942—which was actually a written editorial which he read to *his* audience of tuxedo-clad New York liberals.

Wallace is the spokesman *for*, the friend *of* "The Common Man"—separated from the masses as the lawyer is separated from his client. But Bryan was "The Great Commoner"—i.e., a common man himself.

REFERENCES

1. "The Extraordinary Henry Wallace" by Robert Humphreys (*American Mercury,* Sept. 1943); "What We Fight For" by Henry Wallace (*Vital Speeches,* Oct. 1, 1943).
2. Henry Wallace: *Paths to Plenty* (1938).
3. Henry Wallace: *The Price of Freedom* (1938).
4. Henry Wallace: *The American Choice* (1940).
5. Rexford G. Tugwell: *The Stricken Land* (1946).
6. "The Scientist in an Unscientific Society" by Henry Wallace (*Scientific American,* June 1934).
7. "Meet the Press" radio program, Jan. 10, 1947.
8. See reference 2.
9. "Iowa Cycle" by Charles M. Wilson. (*The Commonweal,* Nov. 10, 1933).
10. "Henry A. Wallace, Cornfield Prophet" by Jack Alexander (*Life,* Sept. 2, 1940).
11. "The Vice-President" (*Fortune,* Nov. 1942).
12. "Spiritual Forces and the State" by Henry Wallace (*Forum,* June 1934).
13. See reference 10.
14. "Wallace, the Great Hesitater" by Paul W. Ward (*The Nation,* May 8, 1935).
15. "FDR's Crown Prince" by Beverly Smith (*American,* June 1941).
16. See reference 10; also "Henry III of Iowa" by Hubert Herring (*Harpers,* Feb. 1943).
17. See reference 11.
18. *Saturday Review of Literature,* March 23, 1935.
19. *Scribner's,* Dec. 1943.
20. Speech at the N. Y. Newspaper Guild Ball, Jan. 1947.
21. Review in *The New Republic,* Jan. 2, 1935.
22. See reference 14.
23. See reference 11.
24. See reference 11.
25. Quoted in Russell Lord's *Democracy Reborn* (1944), a collection of Wallace's speeches.
26. Russell Lord: *The Wallaces of Iowa* (1947).
27. See reference 26.
28. *Time,* Dec. 4, 1944.

HASH HOUSE

—by Directive

THE soup was canned. Campbell's. Vegetable. 20c. It steamed lazily in the plate and tasted just like any other canned vegetable soup I had ever had. I finished it, and the counter girl brought me a slab of meat, canned peas, and french fries. Pie for dessert, and coffee. Uh. That was dinner.

The furnishings were hash-house moderne (as advertised in Bar and Grill Management). The counter was red composition with chromium fixtures. The stools were chromium, too with red seats to match the counter. On the shelf behind the counter were black composition dish and cup holders, piled in pyramids. Cans of soup were piled in pyramids, too. Vegetable. Mushroom. Chicken Noodle.

Against the opposite wall stood a juke box, high as your head. Lights inside colored its fat curves, now red, yellow, blue, purple, deep purple. The music (canned) licked my ears with wet, sloppy strokes, like an overly affectionate dog.

A group of teen-agers clustered at the other end of the counter. They weren't dancing, but they swayed to the music and moved around each other like courting pigeons. At a table some older men were playing cards. Another group was talking with the proprietor. Both men and women slouched at the counter with easy familiarity, and I had the uneasy feeling that I, as a stranger, was invading the privacy of their communal livingroom.

Of course, it was no coincidence that this small town hash house looked like twenty-five other small town hash houses I'd seen at one time or another. No coincidence, certainly. It was all done by directive from Washington: The Small Town Culture Pattern Authority (STCPA) a federal agency, little known, but potent. I've never seen the directives of this agency governing the establishment and maintenance of public eating places in population centers 5,000 to 50,000. Hence I can only present a rough draft of the directives, gathered from personal observation.

Section I—

paragraph 3. All exterior signs shall be in neon lights, preferably red.

paragraph 8. Motion picture advertisements shall be liberally displayed. (for size, copy, and presentation of motion picture advertisements, c.f. Motion Picture Advertisement Code, Section VII, paragraphs 6-8-9c.)

Section II—Sub-Section B.—

paragraph 4. All fixtures shall conform to established requirements of chromium and leatherette. (C.f. subsection A.)

Section III—

paragraph 5. There shall be prominently displayed over the cash register a calendar and picture of a female figure not less than 85% nude.

paragraph 8. There shall be an automatic recording machine, lighted in primary colors and centrally located. (For musical selections to be heard, c.f. monthly bulletin of Music Culture Authority.)

paragraph 10. All pin ball machines shall be equipped with appropriate rattles, gongs, and bells. (ARP sirens optional)

Section IV—

paragraph 1. There shall be employed at all times as counter girl one mouse blonde (aged 18-26) made up

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to look as much as possible like a cover on Life Magazine.

Section V—

paragraph 2. All food served, particularly in large agricultural districts, shall be canned whenever possible.

As I finished my flannel bakery pie and was lingering over my coffee, I happened to get into conversation with the proprietor. He was a beefy man with a pleasant, blank face. In the course of talk I mentioned the STCPA—casually—and how difficult it must be to work under them.

He shrugged.

I told him that I'd always lived in large cities, but that I knew the *real* America was the small town, main street, the crossroads of the country. That was where the vitality and originality of the American people grew and flourished. Now the STCPA was straight-jacketing all that free originality, pounding it into a mold.

The proprietor listened with a slightly bewildered frown. If I hadn't known better, (he was being careful) I'd have thought he'd never heard of the STCPA.

WALLACE HAMILTON

ROME LETTER

LAST night, before going to sleep, I decided to start this letter with a few words about the German problem. You have got to talk to people in France and in Italy, to be taken around and told: this is the building were the SS were, here was the Gestapo, here was the (Laval) Militia, here were the Black Brigades, to be told innumerable stories, and above all to realize what the Germans *meant* to everybody, in order to begin to be aware that it is still utterly impossible to put the German problem on a rational political basis. Contempt and fear are the main themes. The step of the German soldier in the street—the din of German iron all over the town—the raucousness of German voices—the German grip on your life, these things are (in a sense) even more present to people than Nazi bestiality, tortures, and destruction. The nausea is still overwhelming. Nobody wants the Germans to be starved, but nobody wants to hear about the Germans either.

The notion that Germans are people like any other people, is not rejected, but simply does not work. Through the Germans, Europe committed suicide. But still the Germans did it. The guilt might be general. But still the Germans actually did it, not the French, or the English, or the Italians (even though, for example, one might say that Italian Fascism was the ominous beginning). This is a somewhat dramatic way of putting it. But again, the question is not a historical one—and not even political. The fact is, again and again, that people did not think man could become what he became with Hitler until the Germans showed that it was a question of mechanisms, and worked it out completely. This feeling of utter debasement, of having been forced to despair of man, is still present everywhere. Going up the road again requires a tremendous effort, and a very cautious one. Thoughtful people consider this to be the only task which makes any sense—and that is why they will be unwilling to talk about the Germans. Bringing in the Germans will arouse wrath on one side, sentimentality on the other. It's confusing. (The effect of the German documents published in POLITICS, for example, was not at all to make the Germans acceptable again. Thus X cites the German worker who "resisted" by not working overtime in a munitions factory—and thought it a manly achievement—while Y cites the letter by the professor lecturing on stoicism with himself as an example.) *

To tell you about the Stalinists would require a study of European politics during the last two years which of course I have not made. One feature is however apparent, namely the fact that the C.P. is never (or almost never) discussed either as a filiation of Bolshevism or, much less, of Marxism. When this is done, it is done only in the most superficial way, usually by reactionaries or by fellow travellers. But the left wing adversaries refrain consistently from raising the fundamental issues. Insistently, tenaciously, and almost unanimously,, they keep the discussion on the level of tactics (parliamentary or factional). The idea is probably to be very realistic, and not raise issues that are not immediately connected with everyday politics. The result is a "realistic" attitude which makes it almost impossible to get to the core of the problem. So, for example, you will hear an intelligent orator at a Party convention (as a matter of fact, it was that peculiar conglomerate of young and old intellectuals, the Italian Action Party) make the subtle remark that, all considered, the C.P. is not more of a totalitarian party than the clerical party, since all mass parties are essentially totalitarian. Which might be true, but still leaves the question of the C.P. in a very vague state.

I did not want to get into the details of Italian politics. But, as far as the question of the C.P. is concerned, in France as well as in Italy, I found "anticommunism" identified by many people with reaction, and "communism" consequently, with the extreme left. The "progressives" are extremely afraid of being caught in an "anticommunist" posture. In its turn, this fear will be justified not on any general ground, but once again, on a "realistic" basis. They will explain to you that, if you attack the communists, you will *objectively* play into the hands of De Gaulle, the M.R.P. or the Italian popists. Conversely, you will be told Communist action is objectively progressive. In any case, they will insist, as long as the political situation remains what it is, there is no choice except *not* being anti-communist.

And now two examples. Agriculture in Central Italy is based on "mezzadria," i.e., a contract according to which the products of the land are divided between the peasant and the landowner on a half and half basis (this used to be modified by several special clauses about cattle, chickens, implements, etc.). Already at the beginning of the war, these mezzadri had become profiteers. Inflation and the black market have made of them millionaires. In this situation the C.P. started a campaign for the betterment of the "mezzadria" contract. The clericals caught on and De Gasperi decided the issue by granting a new contract according to which 60 per cent of the crop would go to the peasant and 40 per cent to the landowner. This, of course did not at all beat the communists, who could boast of having launched the campaign and forced the Government to yield. The clericals, however, succeeded at least

---

* Editor's Note: I know X and Y to be sincere, intelligent men of good will; both are contributors to POLITICS. One might remind them that both the worker and the professor served years in prison under the Nazis (as stated in the letters which X and Y find so contemptible). But the point of this footnote is not so much to argue with X and Y—the reader may judge for himself by looking up pp. 14-17 of the January issue—as to underline Chiaromonte's estimate of the depth of the dislike felt by Europeans today for the Germans as Germans. When men like X and Y react in this way, we must recognize that the "German problem" is even more difficult than it appears to us over here.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in defending the important electoral positions they hold in Tuscany. Result: a C.P. whose strongest rural basis is a new class of authentic kulaks, and whose strength manifests itself in the violent suppression of any attempt to build up an independent socialist party. The socialist mayors of two towns in Emilia were killed by Communist armed squads. A situation very similar to that created by the Fascists in 1920-21.

Second example: you might have read in the papers how the Italian C.P., with a sudden about-face, made possible the approval of article 7 of the new Constitution which not only sanctions the Fascist Concordat but makes any modification of its clauses equivalent to a modification of the Constitution. Without Togliatti's support, the article would have received only a slight majority (7 or 8 votes), if any at all. Since Italy is, after all, an anticlerical country, the public disgust with the action of the Stalinists is rather strong. With Togliatti's support, Italy has become in fact a clerical Republic. Communists and communist sympathizers will explain to you that the C.P. could not afford being put in the position of starting a "religious war" (which is what the Pope threatened if article 7 were to be rejected), and that moreover, it was most important for the party of Lenin to steal as many votes as possible from the clericals, in order to bring nearer the moment when a homogeneous socialist government would be possible.

That is that. People are indignant. But as soon as the question of "practical" politics comes up, they argue that only the C.P. is able to stem the neo-fascist wave—that only the Communists know what they want—that only the Communists actually defend the working class, and so on and so forth. The fact is that at least 80% of the industrial workers are Communists and that, together with the aforementioned kulaks, the CP also enjoys the support of one of the most miserable classes in Europe: the Italian agricultural workers.

I won't go into the details of the Italian political situation, for the simple reason that I don't know it yet.

Rome, April 2 NICOLA CHIAROMONTE

DUTCH LETTER

TWO things struck me most when I arrived in Holland. The first was the relative abundance of food, which indicates the amazingly quick recovery the Dutch have made from the social chaos left by the German occupation. The second was the warlike atmosphere of the country, conveyed both by the large numbers of soldiers in trains, streets and bars, and by the continual talk of the impending war in Indonesia.

The Dutch recovery has been due mostly to a resilient agricultural system, based on an intelligent peasantry willing to co-operate and anxious to take every advantage of scientific advances in the field of agriculture. At the end of the German occupation, the Dutch people, particularly in the towns, were living on a diet whose staple food was often sugar beets or even, in extreme cases, tulip bulbs. The production of Dutch farming had sunk to about 40% of its pre-war level, and much of this was being taken by the Nazis. Immediately after the liberation, however, the Dutch farmers began to return to their old methods of intensive cultivation and co-operation. This year agricultural experts foretell a production of 120% of pre-war!

It is no exaggeration to say that the prime preoccupation of the Dutch ruling class today is to build a large and well-equipped army, and everything else is being subordinated to that end. Although food is abundant, almost all other consumption goods are scarce. Clothes are difficult to buy, poor in quality and dear; the workers whom I saw in Rotterdam and other industrial centres are very inadequately dressed for the bitterly cold weather we experienced at that time.

Nevertheless, Dutch factories are working full time, and there is little evident unemployment. This is because many of the young men are taken into the army, and a high proportion of the other workers are engaged on military contracts. Dutch exports to England and America are also increasing, and wherever possible these are used to pay for military supplies; only recently it was revealed that a consignment of $10,000,000 worth of eggs, which the Dutch government had said would be sold to buy "consumption goods" in England, was actually being used to buy military aeroplanes.

The militarization of Holland is more or less forced on the Dutch by the present perilous situation of Dutch capitalism, which faces a heavy and increasing indebtedness, combined with an adverse trade balance. Before the war Holland, in relation to its population, was one of the most wealthy of capitalist nations. Its prosperity was built mainly on three external sources, all of which have now declined drastically. The first was the very large pre-war market for Dutch agricultural products in North Germany. This has completely disappeared, a fact that explains the Dutch anxiety to reach an arrangement that will bring some kind of economic recovery in Germany. The second was created by the Dutch mercantile marine, which in pre-war days secured a high proportion of the world's carrying trade.

MODERN REVIEW

June Issue Now Available

ARE THE GERMANS PARANOIACS?
Nicolas Calas

FROM SOCIALIST UTOPIA TO TOTALITARIAN "REALISM"
Raphael R. Abramovitch

REPLY TO LEON BLUM
Peter Meyer

TOYNBEE'S HISTORY: A REVIEW
Paul Kecskemeti

$5.00 a year (12 issues)
ENTER YOUR SUBSCRIPTION NOW

MODERN REVIEW
7 East 15 Street
New York 3, N. Y.

Please enter my subscription to MODERN REVIEW for one year.

☐ $5.00 enclosed ☐ Bill me later

Name .....

Address .....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Today the Dutch merchant navy is much diminished, and it is unlikely to succeed in recapturing its former fields in the face of intensified British competition.

The third and greatest external source of wealth lay in the Dutch East Indies, Holland's greatest market for manufactured goods, its greatest source of raw materials, and an almost inexhaustible source of jobs for the younger sons of the bourgeoisie. But now this rich province is in the throes of an independence movement which makes it, at least temporarily, a somewhat unsure territory for exploitation by Dutch capitalists.

The Dutch ruling class cannot afford to see all these great markets go without a struggle, and they are therefore preparing to make a hard fight for the recovery of their Asiatic empire. To wake war on the Indonesian independence movement and make the East Indies once again secure dependencies of the Dutch crown is the first object of the present militarization of Holland. The army is already much larger than before the war, and is being trained and equipped as rapidly as possible. Transports loaded with troops and equipment leave regularly for the East Indies, and it is regarded as a foregone conclusion among Dutchmen that as soon as preparations are completed a really large-scale offensive will be mounted against the Indonesian movement.

It is perhaps significant—and certainly very striking—that the uniforms worn by the Dutch soldiers are identical in every respect—except for badges—with those of the British army. Certainly there is a very close liaison between Dutch military circles and those in England and America. British loans and British equipment have done much to build up the Dutch army, and it is thought by many of the Dutch that the Western powers regard Holland as a base on the continent in the event of a war with Russia. There are persistent rumors of secret military agreements to this effect.

The war against the Indonesians is popular among the middle class Dutch, and mildly unpopular among the workers, though there has been little effective opposition. The Communists organized some demonstrations among their followers to make political capital, but the real opposition has been mostly individual and unorganized, shown in the high percentage of deserters and the occasional mutinies which break out in Dutch ships bound for the East Indies. One occurred recently at Port Said. There are also now some 700 Dutch C.O.'s, which I gather is a record.

The working class movement in Holland is divided and dispirited. The workers have many reasons for grievance—low wages, long hours, the shortage of housing, fuel and all commodities except food, the vast differences in living standards between the poor and the rich. But so far no movement has arisen which gives any adequate expression to these grievances.

The social-democratic politicians and the trade unions under their control support the government, and acquiesce in its policy of low wages, thus showing themselves more short-sighted than many of the employers, who have often actually been prevented by the government from giving their workers improved conditions. The Catholic and Protestant unions, which are still powerful, also support the industrial policy of the government.

The Communists have gained an increased influence since the liberation, and have used this to secure key positions in the labor movement, so that many unions are now in their control. At present the Communists are in opposition, and for tactical reasons are attacking the official industrial policy. But it is widely thought that they are anxious to enter the government coalition, and will then accept the low wages policy.

There is a small left-communist movement, centred round the periodical *Spartacus,* which follows the teachings of Rosa Luxembourg; and the Dutch anarchist movement, which had declined considerably since the great days of Domela Niewenhuis and Bart de Ligt, is beginning to rise again. But so far neither of these movements appears to exercise any really important influence among the workers.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Where Is Karl Fischer? (2)

On January 22, Karl Fischer, an official of the Linz, Austria, Labor Chamber and an anti-Communist socialist, disappeared during a trip in the Soviet zone in circumstances suggesting foul play by the Stalinists. From readers who have been sending him packages, and from European friends, we got the story, for which see p. 75 of the last issue. Recent developments in the Fischer case:

In reply to a cable to General Clark on March 20 requesting an investigation, signed by Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, John Knox Jessup, Dwight Macdonald and Dorothy Thompson, we received a letter dated March 26 from Major Richard M. Lee of his staff:

"As General Clark is in Moscow attending the Conference of Foreign Ministers, I am writing in reply. . . . A telephone call was made from this Headquarters on March 21 to Col. McConnell, Chief Military Government Officer in Linz, asking him to investigate. . . . Col. McConnell contacted the Linz Police Office and discovered that Mr. Fischer was last seen on 22 January crossing the bridge at Linz and entering the Russian zone."

On April 18, we heard from Lieut.-Gen. Geoffrey Keyes, Deputy Commanding General in Austria:

'The investigation . . . has failed to shed any light on this case. . . . I am informed the Austrian authorities are conducting an investigation of this disappearance. Although no tangible results have been obtained as yet, the Austrian police have no evidence to substantiate the theory that Mr. Fischer's disappearance was the result of action by the Soviet element. Because of his political background, they feel that it is more reasonable to suppose that his political enemies in the Communist Party were responsible. The Austrian police will keep this headquarters informed of developments and any information will be promptly forwarded to you. . . . A few days ago I received a letter from Mr. Hilldring, Assistant Secretary of State, in which he enclosed a copy of your press release concerning the Fischer case, and I am also sending him the above information. . . ."

Thus the wheels have been set in motion, and we may hope for some further light on Karl Fischer's disappearance—though it would be nice if our top brass in Austria could develop enough political sophistication to realize that the distinction between "the Soviet element" and the Austrian C.P. is not so sharp as the Austrian police would have them believe. However experience is the mother of wisdom, and we are grateful that the American authorities are interesting themselves in the case.

Meanwhile, the question remains: WHERE IS KARL FISCHER?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FILMS

IF *Ivan The Terrible* and *Monsieur Verdoux* prove anything, it is that their makers are finished. Both movies show an intensification of the faults to be found in *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and *The Great Dictator* (1940). Prior to those earlier films, Eisenstein and Chaplin were living legends, bolstering the apologetic thesis that an occasional great picture could be produced, despite commercial or political restrictions. It was argued that what was needed most of all was genius (with enough personality or capital to assert complete charge of production). The acknowledged geniuses were these two *artists,* whose mere existence guaranteed that the situation could not be hopeless. Now at last the fact is plain that the last two reputations held over from the silent era have foundered. The temptations of the sound track have destroyed both Eisenstein and Chaplin, as demonstrated by the monotonous, theatrical styles of *Ivan* and *Verdoux.*

1.

The theme of *Monsieur Verdoux* is both attractive and airtight: Business Enterprise is Murder. Further ramifications indicate that there are two kinds of business, big and little, and business (or murder) is measured in terms of quantity, so that large quantities (good, in modern society) are infinitely preferable to small quantities. Therefore, mass murder (big business, or war) is richly rewarded by a grateful population, while small murderers (small businessmen) are punished in proportion to the amount of horror that can be brought to bear against the culprits in Court.

However, Chaplin's screen treatment of the idea is disintegrated and leaky. By far the greater part of the picture is concerned with M. Verdoux's last four business ventures, the marriage with and murdering of stupid women for their cash money. It is symptomatic of the style that his previous history is revealed in time-wasting talk, and that the last "deal" is concluded after perhaps 90 minutes in which there is very little progression of the story or the idea (the thing begins with the disappearance of one victim and ends with Verdoux's escape from the last "wedding"). It takes too long to establish Verdoux's character of a small businessman whose fortunes fluctuate between the typical states of prosperity and non-prosperity. One suspects that Charlie is conducting an entertainment based primarily upon his virtuosity in comic turns. But the Idea has to be put across, so a montage-transition, featuring world economic collapse, Hitler, Mussolini, et al, takes the story to the eve of World War II. At this point Charlie appears again as a defeated and retired businessman whose crimes are accidentally discovered. The trial and death cell scenes give him a platform (not unlike the one in *The Great Dictator*) from which the Idea is presented verbally. A comparison with *Modern Times* (1936) would be the best demonstration of Chaplin's decay. In that picture, the idea was an inseparable part of the action. At every moment there was a constant revelation of the theme. In no other film has there been such a brilliant *immediate* focus upon the terrible and ironic frustrations of an individual in modern times. The audience applauded Chaplin's ability to sustain the idea without the use of words (he was a genius, they said; the only one who could use the presumably inferior and certainly outmoded silent technique), but failed to note that this is the only way to communicate ideas on the screen.

Now it is demonstrated that not even a genius can get far with the presumably superior medium, the talking film. The comparison I am making is in style, visual vs. non-visual, not in the actor (Chaplin vs. somebody else). The complicating factor is Chaplin himself, who is still, as always, the most interesting of all screen actors to *watch,* but in *Verdoux* his movements and gestures are subsidiary to the ideas (words), not synonymous with the meaning. The result is stage form, wherein the priceless movements have to be halted interminably throughout the picture, so that the audience will not be diverted from the words, and at the end a lecture must be given in order to prove that the recent events have been significant and worth the trouble.

2.

The New York screening of Eisenstein's *Ivan The Terrible* (Part I) gives an opportunity to see a widely discussed film. The verdict is that *Ivan* is pretty bad, easily as bad as *Rembrandt* with Charles Laughton, or Renoir's *Marseillaise.* The *Times* reviewer calls it art (perhaps he is expected to, for only Art could be so dull), and mentions that "It is, in the recognized tradition of previous Eisenstein films, almost completely lacking in conventional narrative style, and the simplest liaisons of continuity, as we expect them in story-telling, are eschewed." The "recognized tradition" is confined to only one previous film, *Nevsky,* which blazed no trails except into the present cul-de-sac, and the obvious reason for the Artist's eschewal of standard cinematic continuity is that, by contrast, it would make the important scenes appear more stupefying in their slowness. Eisenstein's penchant for episodic treatment is nothing new, of course. The point is that with *Nevsky* he broke away from the old-style episodes (chapters, "adventures,' cantos, etc.) that give a feeling of scope to novels and narrative poems by their very number, and are thus more suitable to the screen's omniscient camera (the greater the number of scenes, the greater the sense of size in a film). With *Ivan,* he is heavily committed to Drama. The construction is even more "chunky" than that of *Henry V,* being a series of half-a-dozen ponderous theatrical scenes, where the brightest characters seem like low-grade morons because they take so long to say a sentence, or a simple word. Eisenstein must indeed be a genius, for only a genius could be so pretentious and still be taken seriously by cultivated people.

3.

So the field is clear for original moviemakers, and the first to appear is Maya Deren. She has made four short silent pictures since 1943: *Meshes of the Afternoon, At Land, A Study in Choreography for Camera,* and *Ritual in Transfigured Time,* and has written a 50 page book called "An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film" (Alicat Book Shop Press, 1946). Something more than half of the book is devoted to difficult and perhaps unnecessary esthetic argument. The rest is specifically about films, and this part is a very good exposition of cinematic potentialities.

The films are unique. To make a connection between them and the familiar abstractions of Surrealist cinema would be to indulge in superficial confusions. It is true that they are obscure, as only private communications can be obscure. They recall the great bulk of modern poetry, whose meaning is readily available to the initiates only, and whose opacity too frequently drives earnest readers

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toward Philistinism. Since these pictures bear little relation to commonly observable actions and attitudes, they leave the audience wide open to easy reflections about artiness and affectations. It is a dangerous course for an artist to take, in the face of the almost complete bankruptcy of cinema as an art, for it must inevitably prevent any widespread popularity among those who are willing to support "adult" films.

Obscurity in ideas (content) is especially unfortunate here, because at last an attempt is being made, without cuteness or sensationalism, to make the cinema stand by itself as an independent medium. Here, for the first time in many years, are straight movies, interesting and often exciting. These are no vehicles for social and political propaganda, or sops to a complacent status-quo attitude. They command attention because they are movies, never less, and occasionally more.

Miss Deren's films are most valuable as a revelation of cinematic resources. The spectator is immediately transported into a new time zone. By fast and slow motion, stop motion (frozen image), reverse motion, and repetition of images, it is established that the time-and-space presented here is not "real" time-and-space, although the actors, things, and places are all real (the shots are in focus and right side up). Attention is held and distraction is absent since the pictures are conceived and executed visually, and all impressions must be received from only one source, the screen. Thus it becomes obvious, after these films are seen, that one cannot see and hear acutely at the same moment, despite elaborate rationalizations in defense of sound-films. A spectator who is habituated to the accompaniment of noise, music and significant dialogue will be astonished at the relative ease and economy with which a moviemaker can achieve concentrated emotional intensity in silence, and how smoothly it can be sustained. The longest of the four films is only 16 minutes, yet more is shown and implied here than in any given two hours of talkies.

GEORGE BARBAROW

The Questionnaire

Preliminary Report

In March, as our readers know, we sent out a questionnaire to our subscribers. For the idea, as well as the formulation of the questions, we are grateful to C. Wright Mills, who teaches sociology at Columbia and is an old contributor to POLITICS. About a third of the questionnaires sent out were filled in and returned—a remarkably high response, especially when one considers that many of the questions required considerable time and thought. A group of volunteers working under Mills' direction at the Bureau of Applied Social Research is now "processing" the replies. On the basis of this statistical analysis, Mills will prepare a report which will appear in our September-October issue. Meanwhile, I give my own impressions of the replies, based on a three-day reading.

1.

For Section I ("A Few Census Facts"), we must wait for Mills' figures. My own impression is that the average age of readers is under 30 and that the great majority went to college and are engaged in some professional occupation: teacher, student, government administrator, journalist, economist, engineer, sociologist, etc. Likewise, not much can be said now about Section III ("Political Ideas"). Most readers don't seem to "favor or belong to" any party, and the proportion opposed to World War II is high, as might be expected. The answers to Section III in general seemed to show a politically variegated readership.

A rough count of the anwers to "What is your opinion of Henry Wallace?" (the questionnaire was sent out before the Wallace profile appeared) showed more support than I had expected: a quarter were definitely favorable, half definitely unfavorable, and a quarter were on the fence. Those favorable were usually all-out: "a very great statesman," "one of the world's greatest men," "the only honest American public servant living," "fearless liberal who goes out after humanitarian values." Ditto with those unfavorable: "the Frankenstein monster of liberalism," "dangerous clown," "an ass." Some of the formulations were neat: "Rousseau without literary ability," "L'il Abner grown fiftyish and political," "dangerous man—should be deported to the 19th century," "a hybrid liberal, over-rank from early forcing and too much intellectual manure," "an aptitude test would qualify him for the editorship of *The New Republic*." By far the most frequent answer was "well-meaning but confused" (or "politically naive"). "I think I like him—help me out!" begged one reader. Another wrote: "A second-rate Leon Blum, a despicable character; I would vote for him." (Similarly, a reader told me how convincing he had found the Wallace article, adding: "You showed him up all right—but all the same I'd vote for him in 1948." The Wallace myth, like all myths, operates beyond the scope of reason.) There may be some correlation between the group of CO readers and the group favoring Wallace. Pacifists are often (a) less politically sophisticated than Marxists, and (b) attracted to Wallace because of his pretensions as "peacemaker" with Russia.

2.

Section II ("About POLITICS") produced answers which will be of great help in editing the magazine. I read all the answers to the four main queries: like most, like least, estimate of 'New Roads' series, and suggestions for new topics.

LIKE MOST:

The magazine is liked for certain qualities: "honesty," "independence," "sincerity," "lack of dogmatism," "courage," "freshness of approach," "free forum for ideas," "willingness to experiment." Typical answers: "its publication of unpleasant facts not reported elsewhere in the press," "its policy of printing articles divergent from the editorial line." Also, certain specific articles are liked: factual surveys like "The Story of Cyprus" and "The German Catastrophe"; Simone Weil's articles; Bettelheim's "Behavior in Extreme Situations"; my own "The Responsibility of Peoples"; etc.

Some of the general formulations:

"the fact that it makes an unashamedly intellectual approach to problems about which at present there seems to be an unlimited violent feeling but very little actual thought, and the fact that it faces the logical consequences of its beliefs" (a fund-raiser)

"an editorial attitude that provided a post to cling to while the tide was running out; a resolute honesty that refused to accept partial, inadequate or illusory solutions; a rallying point for those who felt that cynicism was unbearable and optimism untenable" (advertising account-executive)

"lack of a double standard of morality, as compared to *The New Leader* on the one hand and *The Nation* on

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the other; concern with political morality, so lacking in other mags" (economist)

"most of all, I guess, is the conviction you have of the importance of ideas" (language teacher)

"its catholicism; the general level of good writing; its radicalism and anti-Stalinism; Macdonald's eclectic jumps from position to position like a political kangaroo (reminds me of some one very dear to me—myself); its format and make-up" (writer)

"its willingness to challenge practically everything" (housewife)

"POLITICS is frequently naive, confused and immature. But it says things which need saying and which are not being said by anybody else; and it is the only magazine in the US which is really working toward something new and (in the true sense) radical. Its emphasis on the individual and on moral insight is profoundly necessary as a counteractive to practically everything else in the world.' (college professor)

LIKE LEAST:

The big surprise here was the large percentage of answers— perhaps as high as a half—criticising some of the articles as simply not intelligible. Long theoretical articles, especially those dealing with Marxism, are especially objected to; the Marxists don't like their content, while the non-Marxist majority feels either (a) that the theme is not worth so much space or (b) that they lack the background to follow the discussion. Some typical (a) replies: "long dreary hashing and rehashing of Marxism," "quibbling," "too much space to obscure discussions of left-wing theologies, ivory tower stuff," "some of the articles sound as if they had been overheard in the Waldorf cafeteria" (*and why not?—DM*), "arguments about what and whether is Marxism," "long-drawn-out theoretical articles." Some (b) replies: "too erudite, presupposes too much knowledge," "over-intellectualism," "too technical language," "too many esoteric articles," "it is very hard to understand." The two reactions are, of course, interconnected: a reader would tend to think unimportant an article he could not follow. Editorially, this was the most useful revelation of the questionnaire: it is clear there has been an important failure of communication. There can be no question, of course, of giving up theoretical articles; but they can be written (and edited) with more consideration for the "lay" reader; over-technical language can be avoided; general terms can be more closely defined. I hope it will be possible to show improvement here. (Though one reader cautions, after complaining he couldn't understand most of the New Roads series: "For God's sake, don't get so flashy and successful that you print only articles people like me can understand.")

There were three other types of objections, less frequent than the above but fairly common:

(1) *Too much polemics*: "quibbling about factional shades of distinction instead of fighting the common enemy," "too much space to controversy, especially with other magazines," "splinter group hairsplitting on esoteric radical points."

(2) *Too much morality*: "its self-assumed saintliness and too frequent forsaking of scientific for emotional analysis," "amateurish thinking in some areas, e.g., morality," "for God's sake stop searching for absolutes!" "an atmosphere of moral and intellectual snobbery," "I used to like its responsible analysis . . . but today POLITICS is irresponsible . . . almost never presents a thought-out position but merely the passing moods of its editor, has succumbed to the 'failure of nerve' its editor so violently condemned a few years ago," "halfbaked attempts at philosophy, emphasis on 'first principles' proceeding from moral criteria; lack of positive reorientation for socialist movement."

(3) *Too much Macdonald*: "degeneration into a personal mouthpiece for Macdonald," "sometimes one subject appears issue after issue because Macdonald is interested in it; the mag reflects the individual too much," "reflects too much the personal prejudices of the editor:" On the other hand, many of the "Like Most" answers specified the editor's contributions, while several answered *both* "Like Most" and "Like Least" with a simple: "D.M." Tucci's column also provoked violent expressions under both headings. ("His intellectual arrogance makes my blood boil," writes the editor of a trade union paper.)

3.

Considering the widespread objections to our theoretical articles, it was bewildering to find a generally favorable reaction to the New Roads series, which was wholly devoted to such articles. About half of the replies here were definitely favorable, with the other half about evenly divided between neutral and definitely hostile. Some typical reactions:

"avid interest and simultaneous personal growth"

"best contribution I have read anywhere on the need for a systematic understanding of government and the individual" (manufacturer)

"idea was excellent, writing was sometimes terrible; they would have been excellent had they been livelier"

"one of the most valuable things you have done although some of it was almost unreadable"

"never got beyond the first fork" (clerk)

"big wind in an empty house" (exporter)

"moonshine radiating from below" (Republican lawyer)

"by the time I had figured out some of the sentences, I had forgotten the points being made" (teacher)

"it was so over my head that I could read it with the radio going" (mine worker)

4.

To the question, "What topic or field would you like POLITICS to devote more space to?" the two most common answers seemed to be: (1) popular culture and/or art and letters; (2) current events. The first of these was so frequent as to suggest that, in a politically depressing period like this one, many readers tend to lose interest in political questions to which no satisfactory answers are possible and turn to cultural subjects as an escape. On the other hand, a number replied simply (and a bit maliciously): "politics." Some replies expect a good deal: "find the road to prevent the coming war," "a new outlook on life today," "ways and means of establishing economic democracy."

A number want more attention paid to practical questions of everyday life; here is, I think, a promising new field, one in which something "positive" and "constructive" may legitimately be proposed. Concrete suggestions—or articles—from readers are cordially invited.

Examples of such replies are: "practical projects of social action for the average citizen," "local trends in the unions, schools, jails and political clubs scattered about the country," "anarchist-decentralist cooperation," "a socio-psychological analysis of *successful* attempts at cooperation—any place, in any form," "specific devices for realizing the goals that you desire," "the relation of general ideas to behavior," "tactics, as well as theory, of nonresistance."

Some other interesting suggestions are:

"delving into remoter ancestors like Hobbes, Mill, More"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"the machine, a la Weil; political descriptions which have progressed beyond the 'capitalism v. socialism' terms"

"a monthly analysis and/or condensation, as a guide to intelligent reading, of worthwhile current books and articles"

5.

The questionnaires seem to confirm what letters from readers had already suggested: that many of the magazine's readers fall, roughly, into two groups. (This is an impression which may or may not be confirmed by Mills' figures.) Group A is the traditional liberal-left, whose philosophy is scientific-materialist in general and Marxian or Deweyan in particular; those whom I call Progressives. Group B are the Radicals, an as-yet amorphous group which includes many of the contributors (and the editor) who have lost their scientific-materialist faith but still consider themselves socialists and are groping around for a more adequate philosophy. These groups define themselves in their attitude toward the New Roads series (a Group B project) and in what they want more of in the magazine. Group A wants more on labor, economics, politics, current events; B more on ethics, 'Ancestors,' culture, and general philosophical subjects. The questionnaires reveal that Group B is larger than my own personal contacts and the letters I get has hitherto indicated; that is, Group A is more aggressive and articulate than Group B, partly no doubt because readers generally write in to express dislikes rather than to approve.

D.M.

Periodicals

MODERN REVIEW, a monthly edited by Travers Clement, Lewis A. Coser and George Denicke. 60c a copy, $5 a year. Contributors are paid 1c a word. Address: 7 East 15 St., New York 3, N. Y.

To date, the best thing about *Modern Review* is that it exists. A non-Stalinist political magazine which prints, in part at least, "highbrow" articles is a wecome addition to American journalism. The first three issues (March through May) have been mediocre—but with some important exceptions.

The mediocrity is due to the large proportion of banal articles by such official "spokesmen" as Blum, Dubinsky, and Childs, and by "big name" journalists like Louis Fischer. "Rebuild Italy!" one article concludes, "The old motto of Filippo Turati is again inscribed on our banner to which rally the most militant workers, peasants, artisans and intellectuals from north and south. . . . We shall advance. *Passeremo!*" While Childs gives out with nonsense like: "The creative part that Roosevelt also played in the movement to transform the military coalition of the War into a permanent United Nations organization is also well-known. Americans are frankly disappointed in the results thus far achieved, but they are not discouraged, and, in view of the great stakes involved, they are prepared to do their full part to make an operating reality out of the United Nations. They recognize that recent scientific developments, including atomic fission, have made world organization a condition of human survival." Etc., etc. This kind of slap-happy optimism, platitudinous to the point of agony, is all too typical of many of the *Review's* articles. We may assume that at least some of the editors know better; the difficulty is that their funds come from the American Labor Conference on International Affairs, which is one of the Protean disguises of David Dubinsky of the I.L.G.W.U. (allied, in this instance, with Abramovitch's Rand School Mensheviks).

On the other hand, the first three issues have also contained some firstrate articles. By far the best was Paul Kecskemeti's "Existentialism: a New Trend in Philosophy" in the March number. Sympathetic yet critical, it considers the whole sweep of existentialism from Kierkegaard through Jaspers and Heidegger to Sartre. Without vulgarizing (so far as my own very limited knowledge enables me to judge), Kecskemeti renders with admirable lucidity the best exposition for a layman of this difficult subject which I have seen. I gather that it more or less single-handed "sold" the first issue, which is one more indication of the fact that ethical-philosophical themes are today the ones which even "political" magazines find most *retentissant*.

Other especially interesting articles were Dudley Seers' on the economic policy of the British Laborites, Josef Guttmann's "Limits of Terror," Fenner Brockway's "Visit to a German Hospital" and Gelo and Andrea's "France's Four Year Plan." The "Comment" with which the editors begin each issue seems muffled: their economic base is probably in part responsible. One might have expected, for example, some expression of attitude toward the Truman Doctrine. On the other hand, the "International Press" section, which summarizes important articles from the European press, is a valuable innovation.

UNIVERSITY OBSERVER, a Journal of Politics published at the University of Chicago. Editors: Philip Rieff, Richard M. Clurman, and others. Quarterly. 50c a copy, $2 a year. 1005 East 69 St., Chicago 37, Ill.

Only one issue (Winter) has appeared of this new magazine, so all one can say is that it has made a very promising beginning. There is nothing positively bad in the issue, and there are three really good articles: Herbert Read's "The State as Patron," Arturo Barea's "Ortega and Madariaga" and David Riesman's "The Ethics of 'We Happy Few.'" There is also an important text: "On Anomie," translated from Durkheim's *Le Suicide*.

Riesman is especially interesting. Taking a recent novel by Helen Howe as his springboard, he gives an analysis of "collectivist ethics"—to which he counterposes "the ethics of individuality"—showing how in this country it makes the isolated intellectual feel less guilty and less alone by merging in the mass average of taste and behavior. "This submission to generally shared interpretations of experience is the most self-effacing form of the intellectual's response to his feelings of social weakness." He goes on to show the same tendency in the behavior of Silone's and Koestler's heroes, and in the context of a Catholic school. His happiest notion is that of "the nerve of failure" (a riposte to Hook's "failure of nerve") which he defines as: "the courage to accept the possibility of defeat, of failure, without being morally crushed." Riesman's line of thought has much in common with that of some of the "New Roads" contributions.

The *Observer's* chief defect is academicism, by which is meant the use of a maximum of terminology to express a minimum of new and/or clear ideas. C. E. Ayres' polemic against the free market—a theme he has labored elsewhere with naive enthusiasm—is an instance. Another is James Hastings Nichols'article on Lord Acton, which is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well worth reading but which loses its subject in scholarly details.

But some academicism is to be expected in a university quarterly, and the wonder is there is so little of it in the *Observer*. Its founding—with undergraduate editors—is an indication of that renaissance of the political and social sciences which seems to be in progress at Chicago.

"Haganah and the Terrorists," By Ben Halpern. JEWISH FRONTIER, March, 1947.

Most complete and informative survey to date of the three Palestine underground "armies": Haganah, Irgun Tzvai Leumi, and the Stern group. Halpern shows overwhelmingly the futility of the terrorist tactics of the last two and the infinitely greater importance—publicity in the American press to the contrary notwithstanding—of Haganah, which, f.e., has brought in practically all the illegal immigrants. It is to be hoped that the article will be given general circulation as a pamphlet or book. Meanwhile, the issue may be obtained for 25c from Jewish Frontier, 45 East 17 St., New York 3, N. Y.

THEODORE DRYDEN

A COMMUNICATION

Sir:

Up to now, we have avoided taking part in the discussion of Marxism in POLITICS, because we believe that a theory may be judged only on the basis of an understanding of the data which it professes to explain. Marxism professes to explain both specific phenomena of social and economic life and also the general nature of society as it has historically developed. But today we are all involved in a profound ideological crisis, and we are only just beginning to understand the economic, social and political phenomena of our day. There exists no alternative general theory from which we may criticise Marxism either in general or in detail. Until such a theory is developed, one cannot say definitely "what is living and what is dead" in Marxism. Meanwhile, one can define one's attitude toward Marxism *only to the extent* research has progressed and is completed.

However, while we believe there is no firm basis for a general criticism of Marxism, we by no means hold an equivocal or neutral attitude toward it. Certain mistranslations in our French Letter in the December issue, and in our "New Roads Discussion" letter in the same issue, oblige us to set the record straight.

To begin with, we do *not* think Marxism is outmoded, or that "a drastic break" should be made with it, or that it must be fought as an enemy.

For one thing, history is not something external to man, as parts of "The Root Is Man" appear to imply. *Man exists in history.* Ideologically, this means one cannot free oneself from a tradition simply by rejecting it. It is in one in the sense that the starting-point for an understanding of one's own world is the thought of preceding generations. One frees oneself from an ideological heritage only by a kind of three-cornered discussion between tradition, the phenomena themselves, and the one who is trying to understand them. To want to jump outside history—that is, tradition—can only result either in an unconscious submission to it, or else in falling prey to a heterogeneous amalgam of prejudies and influences. Furthermore, Marxism is not a *hampering* tradition. It was the most advanced method of historical research, which has enormously contributed to our understanding of the whole social process. One does not orient oneself only to "eternal problems" and "moral and philosophical ideas." Marxism was the great school for modern revolutionary theoreticians. Its teachings are not "platitudes" but the result of a mighty and rigorous labor. They are rich in truth and include an explanation of society in the era of free capitalism without which later developments cannot be understood.

We do not say, however, as some French existentialists do, that perhaps "we shall rediscover Marxism as we explore present-day reality and analyze our times" (Merleau-Ponty, "Pour la Verite," in *Les Temps Modernes,* No. 4). We believe that the ideological crisis of today is caused not only by the crisis of mass political action but also by the rise of new social, political and economic phenomena which the concepts of Marx and Engels are not sufficient by themselves to explain.

That human freedom is not only an individual question but that there exists also the problem of *social* freedom—this was an insight acquired by the 18th century philosophers whose work was bound up with that period's social movements, notably the French Revolution. Thenceforth, the total problem of human freedom was tied up with, as in Hegel's case, social conditions and their historical changes. There remained only the discovery, and Marxism made it, that man could be genuinely freed only by the revolutionary action of the oppressed masses. But, important though it was to have discovered that the idea of human freedom became a "material force" for revolution when it seized hold of the consciousness of the masses, Marx never satisfactorily answered the question *under what conditions* the masses play the role of liberator of man, and under what conditions they fall back into a follower-psychology (*"suivisme"*). Yet this is today a crucial problem, since the Stalinists have shown that workingclass as well as pettybourgeois masses can fall victim to *suivisme.* Further: Marx-Engels showed us that the freeing of man is linked to economics in two ways: (1) to a high level of productivity; (2) to the abolition of all property and work relationships which mean the exploitation of men by other men, as with capitalism. But our modern experience shows us that other than economic factors also af-

The April HUMAN EVENTS PAMPHLET

"After the Years of the Locust"

by HEINRICH HAUSER

The author of **The German Talks Back** again has something provocative and important to say about the Germans and their conquerors.

The Human Events Pamphlets Published Monthly — **Single Copy 25c By Subscription $2 a Year**

HUMAN EVENTS ASSOCIATES
612 South Dearborn Street
Chicago 5, Illinois

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fect the liberation of the workingclass. One looks vainly in Marx for an answer to this problem, however. Again: orthodox Marxism's concept of the State does not seem to us to explain satisfactorily the totalitarian State.

It is a century since Marx and Engels began work on *The German Ideology*. They were quite conscious, as Marx wrote in 1844, that "there can be no question of blueprinting the future or of settling problems once for all." What was needed, he wrote, "was something much more concrete: pitiless criticism of what exists, without regard to either the effects on theories or the conflicts with existing authority to which this may lead us." They "took stock of their own intellectual background" in order to open up a road to an understanding of their own period. Which meant, first, to review critically Hegelian philosophy, German philosophic idealism, and the bourgeois movements of social liberation.

To "take stock of one's intellectual background" means to the socialist theoretician of today to come to grips with Marxism, appreciating its scientific discipline and learning whatever it can teach, but constantly keeping the concrete real world in sight and not worrying about whether certain ideas once thought to be general laws may be revealed as historically limited.

Permit us also to make clear our attitude toward existentialism.

The ideological crisis gives a new relevance to certain problems on the borderland between philosophy and political theory. In the face of the cynicism and contempt for man now widespread in large sections of the workingclass movement, we must remember that socialism arose to fight for the liberation of the oppressed *as individuals and in the name of human nature.* We socialists must reexamine critically our aims and methods. We must reexamine the criteria by which we determine what is progressive and what is not, and we must clarify our idea of human nature.

Insofar as the French existentialists have recognized the importance of these "borderland problems," one must give them credit. Also insofar as they emphasize the difference between a Man and a Thing, and try to draw practical conclusions from this emphasis. "It is a scandal which nothing can make up for," writes Simone de Beauvoir apropos torture and political trials, "when a man deliberately sets himself to degrade another man to a thing." Nor is it accidental that the existentialists are attacked by the representatives, in the workingclass movement, of a policy which in the name of alleged "historical necessity" demands the sacrifice of existing generations and their subordination to ends which, in reality, are those of power-politics. It did not suit the Communists' book that their workingclass pawns should be reminded of their buried aspirations for freedom and individuality, nor that the mute rebellion which, despite the massive votes for the "workingclass" parties, simmers in the French proletariat, should make contact with a new idealism of freedom which refuses to compromise.

It is by no means certain, however, that the existentialists will succeed in solving these 'borderland' problems. Sartre, for instance, appears much more interested in the philosophical than in the social aspect of the problem of human freedom. If he recognizes the necessity of "freeing man by enlarging his possibilities of choice," it is because he thinks that, in society as given today: "In certain situations, there is room only for an alternative, one of the terms of which is Death." Hence: "We must act to the end that, in every situation, man can choose Life." Obviously the problem of freedom is not thus posed to the exploited. For the present, we can say no more than that the philosophical renaissance that has been stimulated by the founders of phenomenology, Husserl and Heidegger, is an advance over 19th Century naturalism.

Above all, let us not forget that *Philosophy is not a royal road* which allows us to bypass those "everyday" problems which the poor scientist tries to master with antlike industry. Philosophy cannot replace the positive sciences, neither mathematics, nor geology, nor anthropology, nor the political sciences: economics, sociology, theory of the State.

Despite their understanding of the necessity for new efforts to analyze with an independent spirit the data of real political life today, the existentialists have up to now not gotten very far in this task. On the contrary, there are signs that they are reaching a dead-end. Consider the article, "The Yogi and the Proletariat" by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (who occupies himself with political questions much more than the other leading existentialists) in the October *Les Temp Modernes,* in which he undertakes to defend the Moscow Trials—and that, too, in the familiar jargon of Stalinism.

We cannot say, therefore, that the existentialists have produced "the best political thought in France." But only that, so far as these borderland problems go, they have made the most considerable contributions, and that in this respect *Les Temp Modernes* has presented some interesting articles.

January 22, 1947. GELO AND ANDREA

The Intelligence Office

One of the most fascinating reports we have read in a long time is "Journey of Reconciliation" by George Houser and Bayard Rustin. It is the detailed, scrupulously objective account of a trip taken by 16 men, white and colored, on the bus lines of the Upper South. The trip was jointly sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Congress of Racial Equality. Beside the authors, the participants included three POLITICS contributors: Conrad Lynn, Jim Peck and Bill Worthy. For two weeks, in small groups, they rode busses in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee, deliberately violating the Jim Crow seating arrangements. Their object was (1) to see how well the companies were living up to the recent Morgan case decision in the Supreme Court forbidding Jim Crow on interstate busses; and (2) to try the effect in the South of friendly, disciplined, non-violent breaking of Jim Crow patterns. Although the bus drivers and local cops had not heard of the Morgan case, the results were encouraging: there was only one case of violence, the police and bus drivers were mostly courteous, some of them even apologizing for enforcing the Jim Crow laws, and passengers often expressed sympathy with the demonstrators. This is the kind of practical experiment in non-violent resistance which is worth many volumes. The story of the trip, and the extremely interesting "General Observations" at the end, should be read by every one interested in the racial question. Mimeographed copies may be obtained from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2929 Broadway, New York 25, N. Y.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DEUTSCHE GEGENWART (Present Day Germany), a new Monthly appearing here in the German language, has just published its fourth issue. This new vital magazine brings reports of the actual physical and mental conditions in the Germany of today, written by Germans in Germany. It reprints important articles from the new German magazines and newspapers as well as original contributions and letters which deal intelligently and self-searchingly with the many new problems the war- and hunger-worn generations must now shoulder. Contributors include Karl Jaspers, Frank Thiess, Rudolf Pechel, Ernst Juenger, Ernst Wiechert, Kurt Schumacher, and Ernst Nickisch. Karl O. Paetel is the editor. A year's subscription is $2.50. Orders and payments should be sent to Hermann W. Schmid, 92-46 52nd Ave., Elmhurst, L. I., N. Y. Send for sample copy.

Anarchism and Strikes

Sir:

In defending his criticism of the miners' strike, Macdonald implied that he was setting forth an anarchist position. Yet, in the many pages he wrote on the strike, he did not once declare whether he was for it or against it. I gather he was either indifferent to the strike or opposed to it. I find nothing anarchist in his inability to choose between the coal miners and the mine-owners.

Anarchists have always supported and agitated for such strikes. Anarchists support all workers acting in their own interests against the bosses, because we know what side we are on. To us, the fact that we workers—whether industrial workers, farmers, white-collar workers, or whatever—are exploited, that our lives and labor are robbed by the ruling class is simple and elementary. The strike is our means of making our jobs and our lives a little easier and more decent.

Macdonald wants us to examine a strike and pass judgment on the workers' demands and tactics before taking sides—and then maybe not find a side worth taking. Certainly we can learn much from discussing why Lewis called the strike, what the demands were, whether the strike has long-range significance. But these have nothing to do with our support of the strike, which follows from the simple fact that workers are striking for economic demands.

Anarchists want to change society. We want men to rebel against wage-slavery and leadership. But we are not "other-worldly"; we are not concerned solely with creating a free society. We believe in cooperation with our brother underdogs to force the bosses to grant us the best conditions we can obtain today.

NEW YORK CITY — FRANK LANHAM (an editor of *Resistance*)

—Comrade Lanham's position may well be more "genuinely" anarchist than mine, though I somehow cannot imagine Proudhon or Bakunin supporting Lewis's latest coal strike. But it certainly is, as he writes, "simple and elementary." Unfortunately, this is a very complex period, and this sort of simpleminded the-union-right-or-wrong piety just balls everything up. For example, Lanham says anarchists always support "workers acting in their own interests against the bosses"; so do I. But the question raised by my article was precisely whether the coal miners can be said to have ACTED at all in the late strike. And I should have thought an anarchist would have been especially alive to the fact that a one-man dictatorship such as Lewis has established by fraud and force over the United Mine Workers is an enemy of the workers just as much as the bosses are. But the Myth of the Proletariat, in whose name the actual workers are told the U.M.W. (or the U.S.S.R.) is "their" union (or fatherland), apparently still fascinates the anarchist, as well as the Marxist, sectarian. —D.M.

CIGARETTES
$1.45 PER CARTON
ALL POPULAR BRANDS
NO OTHER COSTS
Minimum order 3 cartons
Perfect delivery guaranteed
Send check or money order to
ACE MAIL ORDER CO.
East Orange N. J.

Politicking

We apologize for the omission from this issue of two promised features: Clifton Bennett's article on the F.B.I. and the special section on Russia. They had to be postponed because the second part of "Henry Wallace" turned out to be twice as long as both the editor and the author expected. Since the next issue will be the special French number, they will appear in September-October, together with a discussion of "science-fiction" by Jack Jones, James Blish and others.

The section on Russia will include a Reading List,

New Shipment from England:

The Russian Enigma
by
Anton Ciliga

This book, first published in France in 1938 under the title, "Au Pays du Grand Mensonge," is one of the most important studies of Soviet Russian society ever made.

The author, a Yugoslavian Communist, lived in Russia as a worker and Party member for ten years: 1926-1936. He describes in intimate detail the Russia of the NEP period, of the Trotsky-Stalin struggle, and of the first Five Year Plan. The latter half of the book is a fascinating and unique description of prison life in Russia.

304 pages $2.00 a copy, postpaid

Order from: Politics,
45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The July-August issue of "Politics" will be a special issue, edited by Lionel Abel and entirely devoted to

FRENCH POLITICAL WRITING

GEORGES BATAILLE: On Hiroshima

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR: An Eye for an Eye

ALBERT CAMUS: Neither Victims Nor Executioners (the recent "Combat" series)

"EUROPEAN": Letter from France

HENRI MICHAUD: "La Marche dans le Tunnel" (poems)

JULES MONNEROT: Liquidation and Justification

ALBERT PALLE: Petiot—Mass Murderer or Patriot?

DAVID ROUSSET: The Days of Our Death (notes of a concentration-camp survivor)

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: Materialism and Revolution

Walter Padley's "USSR—Empire or Free Union?," Walter Kolarz's "Pan-Slavism in Eastern Europe," and three extraordinary first-hand documents reprinted from the New York newsletter, "New Views." As for Bennett's article on the F.B.I., we guarantee—after reading the first draft—that it is the most complete study of that institution to date. Readers who have any special knowledge of the F.B.I.—or have had personal experiences with the G.Men—are urged to write in to us and make Bennett's article even more authoritative. With Truman's "Red Purge" now in the works, this job of counter-espionage becomes more important than ever for all whose "Americanism" is not up to J. Edgar Hoover's specifications.

Through an oversight, doubtless Freudian, we forgot to note in the last issue that Leslie Farber's review, "Mario and the Hypnoanalyst" originally appeared in March 4, 1946 *New Republic,* whose editors kindly gave us permission to reprint it. Also that Mr. Farber is a psychiatrist attached to the Veterans' Administration.

"Henry Wallace (1)" seems to have been enjoyed by almost every one except the subject. Although we printed

WANTED! COPIES OF THE MARCH, 1945, ISSUE OF "POLITICS." We need these to complete sets. We will extend your subscription one-half year (or give you a new 1/2 year subscription) for each copy sent in. Address Ann Matson, Business Manager. 357

Have you enjoyed this issue? Why not subscribe? The blank below is for your convenience.

POLITICS, 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

Enclosed is $3. Please send me one year (6 issues) of "Politics." (Add 30c in Canada, 50c other foreign countries.)

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... UNIT ..... STATE .....

an extra 500 copies (5500 instead of 5000), the issue is already almost exhausted. The few remaining copies are available singly at $1, or at the regular price if part of a subscription. If there is enough demand to make it economically possible, we shall reprint both articles as a pamphlet. Interested readers will do us a favor if they will let us know how many copies of such a pamphlet (to sell at about 50c) they could use.

Volunteer workers are needed to help codify and classify the Politics questionnaire. Readers who can give some time should call up Mrs. Irving Sanes between 9 and 10 A.M. at MAine 5-8133. Or drop her a card with *your* phone number, at 119 Henry Street, Brooklyn 2, N. Y.

Classified Advertisements

FOR THE ANARCHIST VIEWPOINT, read *"Resistance!"* Monthly. No charge for subscriptions. Send name and address to: Resistance, P.O. Box 208, Cooper Station, New York 3, N. Y.

"WHAT I MEAN IS," mimeographed monthly of *unrestricted* polemicism, publishes *your* contributions. $1 for fifteen months. Free sample. Bullock, 417 West 120 St., New York 27, N. Y.

POLITICS PAMPHLET No. 1 25c

The ILIAD

or, The Poem of Force

BY SIMONE WEIL

Now on Sale! Ask your bookseller. Or order direct from "Politics." 25c a copy. In lots of 10 or more, 15c.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED